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AFRICAN REVOLUTION ON THE MARCH!!

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EDITORIAL NOTES

AFRICAN REVOLUTION ON THE MARCH

The African continent is in a ferment of social revolution. From one end of the continent to the other, the pressures for change are growing, and peoples are being galvanised into action in support of contending class and national forces. On the surface the contemporary African scene seems to be one of unending conflict, of coups and counter-coups, of invasions, plots and assassinations. To the imperialists and racists the turmoil in Africa is proof of "the defects of the African character", "the backwardness of African civilisation", "the instability of African institutions", as though such things as concentration camps, mass arrests, torture, judicial murder, pogroms and executions were never known in the recent history of Europe or America. Even to lump all Africans together is an insult to our nationhood, our history and our culture. Yes, we are varying shades of black and white; and yes, we live on the African continent. But no, we are not all the same. Daily it is becoming more and more evident that Africa consists of a variety of very different nations, states and peoples, in different stages of historical development, and that African society is subject to the same divisions, stresses and strains as affect the development of the peoples of other continents.

In actual fact it is the imperialists themselves with their policy of neo-colonialism, economic blackmail, CIA plots and assassinations, bribery, corruption etc., who are responsible for the conflicts which scar the face of contemporary Africa. As a cover and in order to hoodwink world public opinion, they try to lay the blame at the door of the African people, hoping in this way to justify their continued exploitation of the continent and its human and material resources. But if there is one thing which all Africans have in common, it is their recent experience of imperialist domination.

At the end of the second world war, there were only three nominally independent countries on the African continent – Ethiopia, Liberia and Egypt – and none of them was in any sense free from the clutches of imperialism, which either owned or disposed of the majority of their resources in the same way as it did in the rest of colonial Africa. First to achieve political independence in the post-war period was Libya in 1951, followed by Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, Ghana in 1957, Guinea in 1958. By now the race for independence was under way. No fewer than 17 states broke free in 1960, and today the total is 49. Only a few pockets remain – the territory of the Afars and Issas (scheduled for independence from France in June of this year); the still disputed Western Sahara (divided by Spain between Morocco and Mauritania in 1975 but contested by the Polisario front which proclaimed the Democratic Saharan Arab Republic in February 1976); and closer home, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Imperialism completely distorted the indigenous way of life of the various African countries, and its worst crime was to deprive them of their self-sufficiency, the capacity to develop and dispose of their own natural and human resources. The hideous ravages of the slave trade are now universally recognised and condemned, even if the psychological and physical damage caused to Africa has not yet been completely repaired. But even where imperialism did bring about economic development of one kind or another, the new wealth generated was almost entirely siphoned off to the metropolitan country, leaving the peoples of Africa ever more dependent on their foreign masters.

It was recognition of their inability to maintain their domination in the old way which, after the second world war, made the imperialist powers more ready to come to terms with the national liberation movements in many countries, more ready to embark on the process of decolonisation. This recognition was not manifested equally everywhere, as the bitter conflicts in Malaya, Algeria, Kenya, Vietnam, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Angola etc. demonstrated. But if there is one general rule which has emerged from decolonisation, it is that the peaceful transfer of power has been to the greater benefit of the imperialist country, whereas on the other hand the attempt to hold back the independence movement by force has resulted in the ultimate defeat of the imperialist power and the drastic curtailment if not total elimination of its former economic predominance. There are naturally exceptions to this generalisation, but they merely prove the rule. It is no accident that the governments of Mozambique and Angola have adopted the policies of Marxism-Leninism as their guiding lights.

Losing Ground

There is a growing realisation in Africa, as elsewhere in the Third World, that the achievement of political independence does not bring in its wake the economic independence which could alone enable the newly independent government to promote an improvement in the living standards of its people. Furthermore, in many African countries independence has resulted merely in the replacement of the imperialist administration by an indigenous elite which has performed the same function on behalf of foreign investors, fattening itself in the process while leaving the mass of the people in the same poverty and ignorance as before.

Earlier this year the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa published a report showing that since 1960 there has been no marked improvement in the economies of many African countries, and that independent Africa has succeeded less than any other region in the world in combating the evils of under-development. Fourteen countries whose per capita incomes range between 100 and 200 dollars a year have achieved no growth at all, and under the influence of neo-colonialism their economies have been declining. A further 22 countries with annual per capita incomes of between 100 and 200 dollars have recorded an average annual growth per capita of only 1.4 per cent — far below the targets set by the UN, which have been achieved by only 9 African countries, four of them oil producers: Algeria, Gabon, Libya and Nigeria. The other five countries which have reached the UN standard are the Congo Republic, Ivory Coast, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia and Zambia, which have per capita incomes of between 300 and 400 US dollars a year. Eleven countries have per capita incomes of between 200 and 300 dollars – Cape Verde, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Swaziland. Another 11 have per capita incomes of between 100 and 200 dollars – Botswana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo and Uganda. Africa's poorest countries with per capita incomes of less than 100 dollars are Benin, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Upper Volta and Zaire.

The overall conclusion of the UN Commission is that if development levels remain unchanged, by the end of the century Africa will be worse off relative to the rest of the world than it was in 1960.

The varying income levels revealed by these sets of figures conceal a number of important factors. The first is that per capita income figures are no guide to the average standard of living, because most of the wealth of the country concerned is distributed either to overseas investors by way of dividends, or to the local governing elite by way of taxes, perks, corruption etc. The sober reality is that the overwhelming majority of the peoples of Africa are still living at or below subsistence level. A second factor is that what economic development there has been in Africa has been largely by way of the extractive industries which result in the wholesale pillaging of the wealth of the continent for the benefit of outsiders, and do not lead to the growth of the infrastructure necessary for economic take-off. A third factor is that development under neo-colonialism has preserved and in some cases strengthened relations between the former colony and the imperialist powers, and helped to keep Africa divided both politically and economically. Of all Africa's trade, still only 10 per cent is between the African countries themselves – a sign of the under-development of the African market and of the lack of communications between the African countries.

Political Consciousness

But Africa is no longer asleep, no longer prepared to suffer and endure without protest. The popular pressures which were successfully mounted to achieve political independence are now being mobilised for a final break with imperialism, and from one end of the continent to the other, conflicts are raging which have their origin in the mass popular demand for social change. If there is an uprising in the Shaba province of Zaire, the reason is that the corrupt regime of Mobutu has exposed itself as an agency of imperialism and the enemy of its own people. Equally striking has been the instant response of the imperialists to help prop up their falling puppet, with the US, France, Belgium, and other Western powers, together with South Africa, rushing to provide the arms he needs to maintain himself in power. The involvement of Morocco, Egypt and the Sudan, side by side with Israel, in this support operation merely demonstrates once again how class interests in the long run determine the direction and aims of the national struggle. And once again, as in the Angolan war, China deliberately allies herself with the imperialists and racists in their bid to crush the African liberation movement . . . a betrayal of the African revolution which will not be overlooked or forgiven.

The imperialist interest in Zaire is not purely economic. To be sure, the United States has about 1,000 million dollars invested in Zaire's mining industry, while South Africa is also involved in a variety of projects and in recent years has supported Zaire with loans and supplies of various sorts. But as important as it is to preserve their investment is the desire by the imperialists and racists to halt the African revolution and preserve the African continent within the orbit of capitalism. At all costs the contagion of the Angolan revolution must be stopped from spreading. And if possible, the occasion must be used to promote the counter-revolution within Angola itself. The CIA and BOSS representatives who have been masterminding the pro-Mobutu operations in Zaire have strategic, not commercial, objectives in view.

The story of Zaire is repeated, with local variations, in every corner of Africa – in Western Sahara, in Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, the Sudan, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, everywhere where conflict mounts or threatens. Without exception, just as in Asia and Latin America, the imperialists are to be found backing and bolstering, with trade, aid and arms, the most reactionary and discredited regimes against the popular forces. They backed the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. They back Mobutu and Banda, the King of Morocco, they backed the FNLA and UNITA, and yes, in Southern Africa, they are the backers, despite their disclaimers, of Smith and Vorster against the national liberation movement. It is British oil companies which have been fuelling Smith's war machine in Rhodesia, and western technology and equipment which are placed at the disposal of the Vorster regime. The aim of the western powers in their representations to Smith and Vorster this year has been, not to bring down their regimes, but to adapt them for survival.

The hypocrisy of the Western powers in their approach to Africa almost surpasses belief. British Prime Minister Callaghan, in an address to an international meeting of leading socialists, including eight heads of government, in Amsterdam last April, warned the Soviet Union to keep out of Africa.

"I am not denying the Soviet Union her legitimate rights as a super-power", he said. "But super-power status brings with it super-power responsibility – to know when to stay out". And he has the gall to say this at the very moment when his Foreign Secretary Owen is hawking round Southern Africa a plan for involving the United States in a settlement for Rhodesia – an area where it has traditionally never before been involved!

Two days after Callaghan it was French President Giscard d'Estaing's turn. Addressing the opening of the fourth Franco-African summit in Dakar, he condemned foreign interference on the African continent, saying: "On this continent, the only way which seems to us possible is that which reserves 'Africa for the Africans'" – this, too, at the very moment when French planes were transporting troops and equipment to bolster the Mobutu regime in Zaire.

The imperialist powers – Britain, France, the United States and the rest of them – have had the run of Africa and its resources for the last few hundred years, and they are still fighting desperately to retain and extend them. It is precisely because the African peoples want an end to imperialism on their continent that conflict rages in Africa today. The imperialists are rejecting their own advice and refuse to get out, to withdraw their bases and investments, to hand back their loot to the people whom they have been robbing for centuries.

True Friends of Africa

In the continuing struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, the peoples of Africa are steadily learning who are their true friends and who the false. When in his speech to his socialist cronies Callaghan says "it would be tragic if the people of Africa had a new foreign orthodoxy thrust upon them, having so recently thrown off the old imperialism", he is uttering two untruths. It is not true that imperialism no longer holds sway anywhere in Africa. And it is demonstrably false to equate Soviet influence in Africa with imperialism.

Soviet aid to Africa takes two main forms. The first – straightforward assistance to the independent African countries – is quite different from the so-called "aid" given by the imperialists. When the imperialist countries give "aid" to Africa, it is designed to ensure the maintenance or development of the kind of economy which will produce profits for foreign investors. In South Africa, for example, the latest figures published by the Reserve Bank show that foreign investment totalled R10.4 billion at the end of 1973. The yield in terms of dividends, interest and branch profits remitted in 1974 was R705 million, or R619 million after withholding taxes. Europe, including Britain, accounted for 73.7 per cent of foreign investment and the United States for 17.1 per cent. By contrast, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have no investments in South Africa.

This picture can be duplicated throughout the continent where imperialism holds sway. Nowhere in Africa does the Soviet Union own any property, or draw any profit from the exploitation of African labour. On the contrary, Soviet aid to Africa is designed to promote development of the economy in the interests of the African people. In that same year 1973, for example, the socialist countries advanced to African countries credits exceeding 3,000 million roubles – half of it contributed by the Soviet Union – on a long term basis at very low interest with no strings attached. More than 75% of the total volume of Soviet aid is directed towards building the industrial base of the recipient countries to enable them to have genuinely independent national economies and rid them of the crushing burden of neo-colonialism. (For further details see "No Room for Anti-Sovietism in Africa" by Ahmed Azad, *The African Communist* No. 66, Third Quarter, 1976.)

The essence of Soviet policy on this question was contained in the Soviet-Mozambique joint statement on President Podgorny's visit to Maputo last April:

"The two sides support the struggle for the restructuring of international economic relations, for an end to exploitation and discrimination in all their manifestations. They will exert efforts to see to it that international economic relations are established on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, respect and just consideration for the interests of all countries. Both sides support the right of states to nationalise their natural resources".

What imperialist power has ever made the nationalisation of the resources of any country in which it has influence a main principle of its policy?

The second form of Soviet aid to Africa consists in unwavering support for the anti-imperialist struggle and for the national liberation movements which are leading that struggle. British Foreign Secretary Owen has frequently made this a subject of complaint. In a speech in the House of Commons on April 19, 1977, Owen – contradicting Callaghan and d'Estaing – conceded that the Soviet Union had as much right as the West to be in Africa.

"They have the right to help", he said, but added, after being heckled by the Tories: "What I said was wrong was that their help was almost entirely confined to the supply of arms and not of development".

As we have already demonstrated, nobody can deny the Soviet Union the credit for development aid which is both substantial and completely disinterested. But secondly, Owen's complaint that the Soviet Union supplies arms to anti-imperialist forces in Africa is not only a misinterpretation of Soviet policy but also a confession of the western failure to give effective aid to the liberation forces.

Listen again to President Podgorny, speaking at a dinner in Maputo on March 29 on the situation in Southern Africa:

"The Soviet stand on the issue of Southern Africa is clear: we stand for the immediate implementation of the inalienable rights of the peoples of Southern Africa to self-determination and for the abolition of apartheid and racialism in South Africa, for South Africa's immediate withdrawal from Namibia and for the unconditional and complete transfer of all power to the people of Zimbabwe.

"It is up to the peoples to decide which road they will follow in accomplishing these tasks. Depending on the situation and the conditions that are taking shape, they themselves choose the particular means of struggle. Needless to say, a peaceful political settlement of all these problems would be desirable. However, because the rights of the oppressed peoples of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa to freedom and national independence are being ignored, their desire to resort to armed struggle is understandable".

It is a matter of pride, and not of blame, that the Soviet Union and the socialist countries have stood by the side of the anti-imperialist and liberation forces in every corner of the globe ever since the Russian revolution in 1917. Owen may regret it, but the oppressed peoples of Africa fighting for their freedom are grateful to have Soviet weapons in their hands; without these weapons, they would be defenceless against imperialist and racist aggression, unable to gather the strength to shake off the chains which bind them to eternal subjection. Mozambique's President Samora Machel spoke for all the peoples of Africa save the stooges of imperialism when he said, in reply to Podgorny:

"We welcome the contribution the Soviet Union has made in fulfilling its internationalist duty; we welcome its resolute support for the struggle of the peoples for freedom and independence, for peace and international security".

Marxist Ideology

The struggle against imperialism and for social advancement does not end with the achievement of political independence, as the conflicts all over Africa today demonstrate. From Cape to Cairo one question is being posed: which way Africa? Back to dependency and serfdom in the form of neo-colonialism, with the masses labouring endlessly in the hot sun for the benefit of a handful of foreign coupon-clippers and their local agents and imitators? Or forward to progress for the whole people under socialism, whereby the immense resources of the African continent are exploited for the benefit of all who live in it, and poverty, ignorance and disease are eliminated once and for all? More and more the peoples of Africa are discerning the true road forward, and on this road, just as on the road to independence, they are finding that the Soviet Union and the socialist countries are their most reliable allies, that Soviet power – political, economic and military – is the most effective counterweight to the still formidable power and influence of imperialism.

Nor is this merely a matter of Africa benefitting by playing off one "super-power" against another, as cynics, Maoists and ultra-leftists choose to regard it. The whole African scene in 1977 is totally different from that of 1960 precisely because African politics is today leavened by the ideology of Marxism, and in more and more African countries Marxist parties are leading the way to freedom. Many governments in newly independent countries are learning – as Fidel Castro admitted in the case of Cuba – that it is often only *after* the conquest of power that the true significance of Marxism can be understood in all its ramifications, revealing the essential link between national and international class struggle. Marxism-Leninism is the indispensable science of mobilisation of the people for social advancement, and the true guide to action. And it is in the crucible of struggle that harsh experience brings home ever more effectively the identity of interest between the international communist movement and the anti-imperialist and national liberation movements, the realisation that socialist support for African independence arises not from opportunism but from the essential nature of the socialist system which is antithetical to profit-taking based on class or national exploitation. Conversely, when British Foreign Minister Owen admitted in a speech in Luanda during his April tour that his refusal to support calls for a total economic embargo on South Africa was based on Britain's economic interests there and "I am not ashamed to say it", he was driving home the lesson that the basic interests of imperialism are fundamentally opposed to those of the peoples of Africa.

It was for this reason that on their visits to Africa earlier this year Presidents Podgorny and Castro were hailed everywhere as heroes and allies of liberation; while Owen was greeted by demonstrators demanding an end to imperialism and racism in Africa of which Britain is rightly regarded as one of the main props.

In the see-saw struggle raging in Africa today, the progressive forces sometimes advance, sometimes suffer defeat, but the overall trend is unmistakable. African feet are now firmly planted on the road to socialism and genuine independence, and the efforts of the imperialists and local reactionaries to turn them from that path are doomed to failure. Nor can spurious calls for African unity divert them. Yes, African unity is a worthy objective, but the question is being asked more and more insistently: African unity for what and for whose benefit? For the interests of imperialism, Lonrho, Unilever, Anglo-American, for Mobutu, Banda, Matanzima and the King of Morocco and the rest of the gang of looters of Africa's wealth? Or unity for the cause of the people, for peace and socialism, for universal brotherhood based on international co-operation instead of cut-throat competition and exploitation?

"Down with capitalism" read a poster carried by students demonstrating against rent increases in Soweto last April. History and struggle are providing the right answers.

THE ROLE OF CHIEF LUTULI

On July 21 it will be ten years since the death of the grand old man of the legal South African African National Congress, Chief Albert Lutuli. In those ten years, much has changed. The ANC, already persecuted and underground at the time of his death, has survived – but changed. It is now deeply enmeshed in the armed guerilla force of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Within the country, legal political organisation for national freedom has been virtually wiped out, multi-racial political parties outlawed. The era of 'Chief', the era of mass militant struggle against white supremacy *within the law*, has gone for ever. What remains is the edifice of white supremacy and black oppression against which he fought indomitably, regardless of self, until his death.

So much is changed that to the young South African militants of today the name of Lutuli is known, recalled by their elders from a past age – but little beside his name. Knowledge of his tremendous personal contribution to that era in which the liberation movement moved decisively into the field of mass popular struggle, with a unified and clear ideology, establishing itself as the real alternative to the apartheid regime, has become faded with time. And with the fading, many different groups are attempting to take on themselves the mantle of

Lutuli, in support of causes which he would never have followed in his lifetime – attempts which must make him now turn in his grave.

There are, for example, the professional South African "liberals," who are concerned always to damp down every flickering flame of black militancy against the regime with counsels of caution and dire warning of disaster if the liberation struggle strays from the path of absolute non-violence. In support they claim to be following in the footsteps of Lutuli, as though he were some saintly pacifist, peace-at-any-price reformer, afraid of mass struggle, cautious to the point of impotence. This travesty serves the sinister purpose of discrediting the present leaders of the ANC, whose deep involvement in the preparations for guerilla struggle is thus depicted as a betrayal of the alleged Lutuli tradition of non-violence, the 'good ANC path.'

The tradition and mantle of Lutuli is claimed for themselves also by that faction of dissident ANC members who have already been formally expelled from the organisation for factional activities. They too claim that their hostility to the present leadership is the 'true' Lutuli tradition, and that the policies of the official leadership are some alien or communist-inspired deviation from it.

Both claims are equally false to the truth, and to the calibre of the man in whose shadow they are advanced. Lutuli was never a man of factions. He was always and everywhere for a broadly based unity of all who fought for liberation, and against separatism and division, whether based on race or ideology. He was also a man with scant regard to personal ambition and personal power, whose every action was determined not by the prospects of personal benefit, but by principle. His life is a record of passionate and unswerving dedication to principles which he held to, often at great personal cost. He was a revolutionary in the best sense of the word, totally committed to improving the lot of his fellow men, totally committed to thorough-going social change to produce a new world of justice and brotherhood. There was never any contradiction between what he believed, and what he did. He believed in the need to change society so that its people could be free; he was never afraid of action to effect that change in our lifetime. When the action that was called for meant resistance to authority even at the cost of his legal status as tribal chief, he took it without hesitation. When there was need to burn his own pass to initiate a nation-wide campaign, to face banishment or imprisonment in order to maintain resistance, or to carry on underground ANC activities long after the Government had made them illegal, there was never any question in his mind. He did what it was principled and right he should do – not what was easy.

In his years as President, Lutuli put his special stamp upon the liberation movement, which survives still. That was the stamp of unity in action. He used his powerful personality first to weld the ANC into a united body in which all tribal divisions had been firmly set aside; then to build a solid unity between the ANC and other liberationist bodies – representing the black, white and brown elements amongst the South African people – so that, in the end, the South African liberation movement under the helmsmanship of Chief, developed those great mass struggles for freedom on the basis of that broad, country-wide and inter-racial unity, which foreshadows the free South Africa of tomorrow.

He was never an ideologist. If he had a political philosophy at all, it was at best an imprecise humanism, or a practical Christianity. But with unshakeable adherence to principle, he championed a real and working unity of ideology of the freedom fighters of the time – ANC Youth League militant nationalists, and Communist internationalists, Gandhiite pacifists and passive resisters. This unity in struggle was the bedrock on which the liberation movement was built under his presidency. And that unity, still standing today ten years after his death, remains as the monument to his contribution.

Understandably, the enemies of the liberation struggle have always sought to distort or traduce him. While he was alive they tried desperately – but in vain – to persuade ANC men on trial to mitigate their own sentences in the apartheid courts by denouncing Lutuli. Repeatedly it was suggested to them by public prosecutors that they should renege on Lutuli, denounce him either as too timid to be a real peoples' leader, or too conservative to countenance militant struggle; too far to the right to be taken seriously by the left, or too close to the Communists to be trusted by the right. But without success. The unique regard and respect for Lutuli in the ranks of the freedom fighters never wavered; none, whatever their ideologies, ever failed to defend Chief, as the first and best amongst them.

There was a unique place held by Chief in the hearts of all the freedom fighters, whatever their colour, whatever their ideology. That was his shield – the unique respect in which he was held by all freedom-loving South Africans, as a man at once courageous and incorruptible. The real strength of his position is to be judged not by the fact that the government saw fit to confine him for ever to the isolated reserve area where he first became a chief; but by the fact that it feared ever to prosecute him even during that great wave of informer and torture-ridden trials in the early 'sixties, which drove every other prominent leader into exile or long-term imprisonment.

The Question of Violence

This comparative immunity which he enjoyed while the ranks of his colleagues were decimated as by the plague, has lent credence to the suggestion that Chief opposed any idea of violent forms of struggle, such as those adopted in 1961 and after by Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the surviving ANC leadership. It has been suggested that, if Chief had lived, the form of our struggle would today be different. Mandela, Tambo and others have been accused of leading the movement in a direction which would never have been accepted by Chief. It is necessary, not just for reasons of historical truth or in respect of the memory of a great man, that the record be put straight; the young South African militants of Soweto and other places who were small children when Lutuli stood at the head of the struggle, have a need to understand and learn from his example. They should know the facts.

Mandela, Sisulu and others who participated in the founding of Umkhonto, as they themselves have publicly testified, did so as leaders of the ANC. They too had served their apprenticeship preaching and leading non-violent action. But by 1960, times had changed; and they judged, for reasons often told, that the time had come to extend the resistance movement into guerilla-style actions to complement the regular types of mass struggle. It was never an individual decision; they acted as ANC leaders would be expected to – in consultation with and by agreement with their colleagues in the ANC ranks, in the leadership and in the rank and file. That their decision to form Umkhonto was with the general agreement of their colleagues is shown by the fact that, despite all the pressure of the state upon them, not a single ANC leader of any stature has yet been heard to oppose that decision.

There were, naturally, good and solid reasons why Umkhonto should be formed, when there were already active ANC units which might be turned into active saboteur and proto-guerilla units. To carry through such a total transformation of the whole ANC tradition would have required months, perhaps years of work, organising, debating, persuading and convincing a membership which had been recruited in an age exclusively non-violent. Without such a total transformation, the hard-built unity of the organisation might be shaken by disagreement. But to carry through such a transformation in conditions of illegality and persecution would be so slow, so fraught with difficulty, that it would be either impossible or achieved over so long a period as to be too late. For these reasons, the new tactics of violent struggle, it was decided, were to be conducted by a new organisation, Umkhonto, formed for that special purpose, its members recruited from the beginning on an acceptance of what it was about to do. Umkhonto was not the ANC, but ANC leaders were amongst its founders, together with leaders of other bodies, notably the Communist Party.

Chief, like many other ANC and Communist Party leaders, may never personally have joined the Umkhonto volunteers, for a host of reasons, not the least being the real necessity to keep alive traditional forms of mass, legal and semi-legal, non-violent struggle. But it is unthinkable that a man of Chief's courage and pursuit of principle would have remained silent about Umkhonto if he had felt it his duty – as ANC leader, or just as citizen and man – to speak out against it.

Luthuli knew as well as Mandela or anyone else that the times were changing; that mass peaceful struggle had not transformed the South African white-supremacist state, and that consequently the violence he had worked for years to avoid was becoming inevitable. He knew as well as anyone that South Africa stood at a moment of deep change – when the chapter of struggles of the fifties was closing, and a new, unknown venture into new forms of struggle was opening.

It was, by a quirk of history, at this precise moment of change and the closing of a chapter, that the Nobel Prize Committee conferred its Peace Prize on Chief both as an individual and as a symbol of the ANC. The first concerted sabotage attacks of Umkhonto against the white state coincided, almost precisely, with the award to Chief at Oslo. To many the contradiction appeared to signal a deep division of tactics in the movement. But in reality it signalled only the passage of a united movement from one phase of its history to another.

Almost from the time of Umkhonto's founding, Lutuli's life was lived out in detention in his tribal reserve, silenced by government banning orders, blacked out by press censorship. Even under those heavy controls, he remained the Chief, constantly clandestinely consulted by his colleagues in the underground movement, still the elder statesman and accepted President. It is impossible to say precisely what would have happened to him had he lived longer. Would he have been finally convicted of illegal political activity, as were so many of his colleagues, and been sent to rot on Robben Island? Or would he ultimately, like many others, have joined the ANC-Umkhonto forces outside South Africa, preparing directly for the new phase of struggle?

He died with that question still unresolved, struck down by a train while his sight was badly impaired and the government withheld permission for him to leave the area of his banishment in order to get medical treatment. Apartheid, which had never managed to shake his courage or his principles, finally killed him.

But his was a life which leaves no doubt that, whatever course he might have followed had he lived longer, it would have been that which his conscience alone dictated; that which he knew to be *right*, without regard to whether it was safe or personally profitable.

Here was a man with a revolutionary's vision of what life *could* be like, if men were free, not slave; and if men were brothers, not masters and servants. That vision inspired his life. And his life has set an example of principle to inspire his fellow countrymen today and in the future, in the struggle for freedom. Here indeed was a hero for our times.

A GREAT LEADER MURDERED

The assassination last March of Marien Ngouabi, President of the People's Republic of the Congo, was a heavy blow to the forces of national liberation and socialism in Africa and the world. Ngouabi was born in 1938 and suffered imprisonment and persecution at the hands of the French imperialists. His experiences led him to devote his life to the elimination of imperialism and neo-colonialism from his country and the African continent.

A tireless fighter for the freedom of his people, Ngouabi soon realised that in the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, the peoples of the Congo were part of a world-wide crusade. His intense nationalism developed an internationalist content, and when he became the leader of his country in 1968, he proclaimed the path of socialist development and founded the Congolese Party of Labour on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

The Congolese Party of Labour faced immense problems in its task of remoulding society. It inherited control of a country stripped of its assets by imperialism and with a people whose development had been stunted by predators interested only in their labour power and not in their development as human beings. The level of literacy and political consciousness was relatively low, though there was a small and articulate working class.

Ngouabi realised that the first task of the CPL was to break the power of imperialism and complete the national democratic revolution before there was any possibility of advancing to the next stage of socialism. But he never lost sight of his ultimate goal.

"We maintain that the future of the world, and of Africa, is associated with socialism", he said. "As we see it, therefore, the option today is not, in effect, between types of society but between the ways and means of building a socialist society. One can speak of African ways to socialism, but certainly not of an African socialism. Then socialism will retain its scientific character and at the same time take account of the specific conditions (that is, history, morality and customs, geography). This is no novel discovery. It was Lenin who said that all peoples will come to socialism – each in its own way and in different forms".

As he made progress in welding the CPL into an effective fighting force, Ngouabi earned the hatred of the local reactionary forces who were faced with dispossession, as well as of their imperialist allies. This hatred mounted to its peak when the Congo came to the assistance of the MPLA in the life-and-death struggle in Angola in 1975/76.

"Imperialism" Ngouabi said, "promotes unjust wars in order to take over power. It violates the rights of peoples, ignores justice and breaks the peace. It encourages divisions among the peoples of Africa in order to maintain its hegemony on the continent. This is why Africans must close ranks and create their own means of liberation and progress in order to frustrate the imperialists' manoeuvres and aggression".

Those who ceaselessly attack the socialist countries for alleged violations of human rights show no respect for human rights when their own vital interests are at stake. Ngouabi was struck down without mercy, just as Lumumba, Cabral, Mondlane, Moyo and other anti-imperialist fighters were struck down before him. The hand which plunged the knife into his body was directed by the imperialists and local reactionaries who were the only beneficiaries from his death. We have yet to hear a word of protest at this heinous crime from the lips of Carter, Callaghan, d'Estaing, Schmidt or any of the other crusaders for imperialism and Zionism who shed crocodile tears because Soviet dissidents cannot always buy *The Times* in Vladivostok.

The South Africa Communist Party has special reason to mourn the loss of comrade Ngouabi. A SACP delegation headed by Dr Yusuf Dadoo visited Brazzaville in November 1975 and in discussions with President Ngouabi and his comrades received assurances of the support of the Congolese Party of Labour and the Congolese people for the national liberation struggle in South Africa.

The death of President Ngouabi is a grievous blow to the cause of liberation in Africa, but his work for progress can never be undone. The cause he stood for is invincible, and other hands will raise aloft the banner of freedom which was struck from his grasp by the counter-revolutionaries.

THE WAY FORWARD FROM SOWETO

Political Report Adopted by the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party
April 1977

INTRODUCTION

The historic events of the past few years have transformed Southern Africa into a major storm centre of the global battle against imperialism and racism. In every part of our sub-continent people's forces stand poised to make fresh advances in the struggle for national and social emancipation. And the issues involved in the conflict are of prime importance not only for Southern Africa and the continent as a whole, but also for the wider contest between world reaction and world progress.

In Angola and Mozambique the people's victories are being consolidated by a continuing struggle against internal and external reaction, and by measures which aim to lay the basis for a socialist society free of all forms of exploitation of man by man.

In Zimbabwe imperialist-backed manoeuvres to avert people's power have suffered a setback and new conditions which make possible a more united and sustained armed assault on the illegal Smith regime are emerging.

In Namibia the attempt to transform the country into another of South Africa's Bantustans through bogus constitutional conferences has been answered by the stepping-up of armed initiatives against the racist occupying power.

In South Africa itself in the recent period, new and more favourable conditions of struggle have emerged, reflected in the heightened spirit of revolutionary defiance shown in the Soweto and post-Soweto period, laying the absis for further advances by the liberation forces.

The unfolding of the stirring revolutionary processes in the various sectors of our sub-continent cannot be explained fully by isolating considerations of one area from another. It is clear, for example, that the dramatic victories of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique have had a profound inspirational effect on the fighting spirit of South Africa's oppressed people, and have also created more positive external conditions for our own liberation movement. It is, on the other hand, equally clear that the continuing external threat to the gains of the Angolan and Mozambican revolutions will be effectively reduced by an increased tempo in our own liberation struggle for the eventual destruction of the racis regime. In this sense the freedom drive in Southern Africa remains indivisible.

Any relaxation of the momentum in any of the areas of conflict thus benefits only the common enemy.

Recent history confirms the vital connection between the drive for liberation in any particular region, and the world-wide coalition of anti-imperialist forces, and, more particularly, with the socialist world community. There is an inseparable link between revolutionary nationalism and proletarian internationalism. A full appreciation of the revolutionary processes in our sub-continent and in our country has, therefore, as one of its starting points, an understanding of the nature of the world-wide struggle against imperialism and for peace and socialism.

INTERNATIONAL

1977 is the year of the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The birth of the first working class state, its growth and development, are undoubtedly the most significant factors in the shaping of modern history of all mankind. The sixty years since the

Soviet proletariat led by the CPSU took power have been years of unprecedented advance in the worldwide struggle against fascism, imperialism and racism, for peace, national liberation and socialism. There is no country where socialism is today being constructed, no country which has broken the grip of direct imperialist control, and no movement which is now fighting for national independence and social advance, which does not owe its achievements partly to the direct and indirect influence of this powerful citadel of the socialist world community.

The growing strength of that community, and its moral and practical commitments to the peoples' struggles everywhere have changed the balance of forces. The capacity of the imperialists to call the tune in the colonial and formerly colonial world is weakened and no longer supreme. Vietnam and Angola stand as the proof of the unconquerable force of a heroic national struggle when backed by that proletarian internationalism.

The imperialist West, of which South Africa is a vital constituent, is plagued by financial and economic crisis deeper than any since the early 1930s. The burden of this crisis is thrown mainly on the working people through rising unemployment and galloping inflation. In contrast, the socialist community, achieving ever greater success in socialist construction, records a consistent improvement in the quality of life of its peoples.

The contrast between these two world systems has not been lost on the millions whose countries have loosened the grip of imperialist control in the past few decades. Faced with a choice of a path for development, those countries seek, however uncertainly, for socialist solutions to their problems of economic, political and cultural backwardness which are the legacies of centuries of foreign domination.

The policy of peaceful co-existence between the socialist and capitalist sectors of the world was pioneered by the great Lenin. The consistent steps taken by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries for the implementation of the Peace Programme of the 24th Congress of the CPSU reached a significant peak in the Helsinki Final Accord. It is the urgent task of all progressive forces to continue to mobilize world public opinion for the deepening of the current process of detente, to make it irreversible and extend it to military detente in order to consolidate peace and international security.

In the struggle to achieve lasting peace, more vigorous actions are needed on an international scale to end the arms race and bring about general and complete disarmament. Indeed, it is precisely during this period of the growing process of international detente that the peoples' struggles for national liberation and social progress — armed and unarmed – have made significant advances against reaction and imperialism.

In Europe the fascist juntas of Portugal and Greece have been overthrown and there has been a historical break-through in Spain for the Communist and progressive forces in the struggle against fascism and for democracy. There has been a new growth of strength in the working class and democratic movements in countries like Italy and France. In other capitalist countries, too, there has been a steady growth in the strength of the working class and democratic forces. And in Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau there have been inspiring demonstrations that imperialism's capacity to achieve its aims through its traditional means of open aggression and war are strictly limited. Nevertheless, imperialism still retains great reserves of strength, and powerful forces within it still work unceasingly for a return to policies of international confrontation by force or the threat of force.

In the Middle East US imperialism continues to maintain tension by rendering all-round military and other assistance to the Israeli Zionist aggressive forces. It creates obstacles towards the achievement of a peace settlement which would ensure the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories and guarantee the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. In Chile, despite growing people's resistance the Pinochet fascist junta remains in power, as a result of continued imperialist support.

Once again the policy of the Maoist clique in China has proved to serve the interests of reaction and imperialism. In complete and shameless violation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and Proletarian internationalism, the Maoists continue their rabid anti-Sovietism and openly ally themselves with Vorster racism in South Africa and imperialism, as in Chile, Angola and more recently, in the intervention in Zaire.

In order to undermine the alliance of the world-wide democratic, national and working class movements with the socialist countries, reaction seeks to spread confusion through the theories of "objectivity" and "neutralism" which are calculated to equate socialist mutual defence alliances with those treaties created by imperialism for aggressive purposes. Our Party believes that any such theories which ignore the class basis of the world alignment of forces serve only to advance the interests of imperialism, and to slow down democratic or socialist progress everywhere. In the same way, we believe that the carefully orchestrated current campaign against socialism in general, and the Soviet Union especially, serves only the interests of imperialism. In this campaign, too, the questions of "human rights" and "dissidents" are presented without any regard to the class basis of the issue or the societies, and are aimed at seducing people from the anti-imperialist camp into the service of imperialism against the peoples' advance.

We believe, too, that it is vital to give effective expression to the world-wide unity of the Communist and Workers' Movement through the holding of an international conference which will elaborate the common tasks in the common struggle against imperialism, for peace and socialism. There is no conflict whatsoever between participation in organized international proletarian solidarity actions and the effective carrying out of our tasks in the South African revolution. Indeed, experience has taught us that far from being a source of conflict, our close and fraternal association with the world socialist forces, and especially the Soviet Union, has broadened rather than narrowed our ability to take effective and independent action in our own situation.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The fact that imperialism is no longer able to impose its will by traditional methods does not mean that it has abandoned its drive to dominate, control and exploit the world's labour and economic resources. But it does mean that, in many areas, it is being forced to find new ways to achieve this purpose. Southern Africa is one such area; and the past year has revealed with great clarity reaction's search for new methods to slow down, or put a halt to, the revolutionary process.

In our sub-continent the whole geography of struggle has been altered by the establishment of peoples' power in Angola and Mozambique. In Angola's Second War of Liberation Vorster's racist troops, backed by foreign mercenaries and local puppets, were defeated. This was an event of profound importance not only for the Angolan people led by MPLA, but also for the wider struggles against imperialism and racism in Africa. The defeat is a watershed in the history of Africa, because for the first time, massive imperialist intervention was frustrated by the heroic struggle of the popular masses with the aid of direct support forces from the socialist world. Imperialism's gendarme in Southern Africa, Vorster, thus received clear notice that his plans for aggression against neighbouring states may not be carried out with impunity. And his boasts of invincibility of the racist forces received a rude blow at the hands of our Angolan brother-liberation movement, inspiring our oppressed with new confidence in our own ability to triumph.

The events in Southern Africa have yet another significance: they have thrown into sharp contrast the differences between real people's power and neo-colonial "solutions", between real liberation of the masses and "liberation" of an elitist minority dependent on imperialist patronage. In short, the events focussed attention everywhere on the choice between a revolutionary nationalism which leads to social emancipation, and a nationalism which serves a small class of exploiters and puts the nation in pawn to international capital. This choice is highlighted by recent decisions taken by the successful revolutionary forces of both Angola and Mozambique to create vanguard parties based on the working people, which will prepare the conditions for building socialist societies.

Both MPLA and FRELIMO have always recognized that the struggle for the aims of the national revolution does not end with the hoisting of a new national flag and the appointment of a local administration of a different colour. They regard these steps as providing the base from which they can continue the struggle for full economic independence, and from which to prevent the fruits of their sacrifice being stolen by an indigenous exploiting class claiming to act in the name of the "people" and the "nation". MPLA and FRELIMO recognize two universal historical truths: that the motive force of history is class struggle; and that the working people need a vanguard party based on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism to ensure that state power in the post-liberation era becomes an instrument for eventually achieving full emancipation within a framework of Socialism.

In many other parts of our continent international capitalism has managed to re-enter through the back door and has imposed new forms of domination and control. The inconsistent attitude of some of these states towards imperialist manoeuvres, and towards compromise with racist and minority regimes in the unliberated areas, is not the result of ideological confusion; it reflects pressure from emerging groups and classes which have tied themselves economically to imperialism in their aspirations to build "home-grown" capitalism. Such classes stand in fear of truly revolutionary nationalism which aims to eradicate not just the form but also the substance of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, and thus the economic base which makes such exploitation possible.

In Zimbabwe, the divisions within the liberation forces have always been encouraged and exploited by reactionary circles. As a result, ZAPU, the ANC's closest ally, has been faced with many serious difficulties in its efforts to advance the people's cause. The attitudes of the individual frontline states towards the competing liberation groups have been of prime importance and have influenced the general pace of the Zimbabwean conflict. The recent close collaboration between these states has made a positive contribution to the Zimbabwean question. We should, however, remember that the frontline alliance is between countries at different levels of economic independence. Within each of these countries the specific correlation of class forces has a bearing on the degree of commitment to radical transformation in Southern Africa as a whole. This helps to explain some of the weaknesses and ambiguities in the approach of certain of the front-line states to the struggle against Smith. Recent developments suggest that, within the alliance, those who reject unprincipled compromise with the racist regime have gained the ascendancy.

But this will not end imperialism's efforts to use its positions of influence in Central and Southern Africa and other parts of the continent, to impede progress towards real people's power in Zimbabwe. With the effective breakdown of the Geneva talks, the first phase of the Kissinger initiative has ended in failure. There is now greater cause for optimism that the struggle against the illegal Smith regime will be continued with renewed vigour as a result of the emergence of the Patriotic Front, recognized by the OAU.

In Namibia Vorster and his allies have had very little success in their attempts to set up rival "national movements", to divide and weaken the people's forces. SWAPO stands unchallenged as the leader in the struggle of the Namibian people for immediate independence, its position recognized by the OAU and the United Nations. Its liberation forces have stepped up armed action against the racist occupying power, refusing to be diverted from this task by the Turnhalle attempts to transform Namibia into another South African Bantustan.

In general, it is clear that the events of the recent period, including an unprecedented upsurge of political militancy in our own country, have brought about new and more favourable conditions for advancing the struggle against colonialism and racism in the whole of our subcontinent.

Sensing the menace to itself from the growing revolutionary pressures of all in Southern Africa, imperialism continued its manoeuvres to achieve settlements which would effectively perpetuate foreign and minority domination under new guises. The latest attempts centre around the Carter-Owen initiatives to pressurize the front-line states and the liberation movements to accept such solutions. These initiatives come in the wake of the Southern African tour by Presidents Podgorny and Castro. Their triumphant reception by the governments and the peoples of Southern Africa has created a new sense of panic in the corridors of racist and imperialist power.

Vorster and his imperialist allies use a variety of weapons to win over indigenous groups for policies whose main aim is to prevent revolutionary advance. They pose as supporters of "majority rule" and as opponents of "racism". They channel financial and material aid – often through revolutionary-sounding funds and foundations – to selected "liberation" groups. They work subtly to divert young militants away from liberation movements, and attempt to capture them ideologically by generous offers of study places in western institutions.

In general, these urgent activities are evidence of the heightened crisis of imperialism and minority domination in the whole of Southern Africa. There is clear recognition that the all-round ferment in the area makes it impossible for reaction to continue ruling in the old way for much longer. In response to this reality, imperialism is forced to take initiatives with which they hope to trap the revolutionary forces, but which at the same time also generate renewed militant responses from the people.

The task of destroying the remains of minority and foreign domination in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia rests with the people of these countries led by their liberation movements.

It is they, and they alone, who bear the ultimate responsibility for deciding the objectives of their struggles, the strategy needed to reach those objectives and the acceptability or otherwise of any proposed settlements.

The contribution of states in Africa whose solidarity can help enormously to speed the liberation drive, will be all the more effective if the initiatives they take are, in the first place, guided by the considered advice and judgement of the movements who bear such responsibility.

SOUTH AFRICA

The key to the future of the whole of Southern Africa and, indeed, the whole of our continent, is the liberation of South Africa itself. It is this question which dominates the thinking and actions of Vorster, and of world reaction which stands at his side. Their tactics in the sub-continent are undoubtedly guided by the desire to "save" South Africa for the west; and today they work more urgently than ever to block any revolutionary advance in this main citadel of imperialism on the African continent. They do so, however, against the background of improved prospects of internal struggle brought about by changes in the Southern African situation and by the stirring events of the past year inside our own country.

The minority regime in South Africa faces a crisis of considerable magnitude, which found dramatic expression in the upsurge which hit the world headlines in June 1976. The Soweto and connected events clearly demonstrate the new mood of revolutionary militancy which grips the mass of our people. Our youth have shown unambiguously their readiness to sacrifice and, if need be, to die in the struggle against minority regime. Our strong and experienced working class responded magnificently to calls for political general strikes which involved about a quarter of a million workers since June 1976 and inflicted great damage on the economy. In the Cape the Coloured youth and workers joined hands with their African brothers at a time when the regime is trying desperately to drive a wedge between them.

A most significant feature of this upsurge is the persistence with which the youth in particular maintained their revolutionary buoyancy in the face of the regime's response to the Soweto revolt, which was perhaps more vicious than any in our modern history of struggle. The mass killings on the streets, the torture and murder in the jails, and the administrative actions against all forms of opposition, have been more intensive than in the post-Sharpeville and post-Rivonia periods. Yet the terror has not, on this occasion, created a mood of defeatism or submission; on the contrary all the signs show that the spirit of defiance and the search for ways of hitting the enemy continue.

The Road to Soweto

The events in what has become known as the Soweto revolt are not isolated happenings; they have their roots in the crisis which has been building up at every level of the socio-economic structure. South Africa has suffered not only from the general crisis of the imperialist west, of which it is part, but also from the special contradictions inherent in the Apartheid framework.

Inflation is rampant, but it hits the overwhelming black majority with an especially vicious effect. Unemployment is rising, but its scale among the oppressed majority is vast, with estimates of two million black unemployed by the end of this year. Developments in Southern Africa put at risk South Africa's supply of foreign contract labour for its mines. Industry suffers from a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour, which arises directly from the historically-based restrictions on black entry into most levels of skilled operations. Vorster's aggressive aims in Southern Africa and the mobilization of greater force against the liberation movement, continue to bleed away economic resources into military expenditure, this year increased to over one thousand six hundred million Rand. Periodic rises in the adverse balance of trade, falls in the financial reserves, and a dangerous slowing down in the rate of economic growth, are all symptoms of serious economic instability.

And, as admitted by the regime, the political crisis since June has, in turn, reacted back on the economic situation to further increase the regime's difficulties.

From the early 1970s the Black working class responded to deteriorating economic conditions and to the growing gap between white and black incomes by strike action in every part of the country, involving hundreds of thousands of workers. Long before Soweto, the youth engaged in sporadic acts of defiance in the schools and in the universities. And in the country areas many acts of resistance were recorded against the regime's population resettlement policy, which empowers it to remove settled African communities from one part of the country to another.

The intensity of the Soweto events reflects the development over the years of these basic people's reactions to the growing crisis of Apartheid. At the political level, unbroken efforts by our Party and the whole liberation movement, headed by the ANC, maintained that spirit of resistance, and helped lay the foundation for the growth of the heightened revolutionary mood which is in evidence. And, amongst large numbers of the new militants thrown up by the activities, there is a growing awareness of the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism and a search for the correct politics of social revolution.

Soweto Assessed

What happened in the streets of South Africa from June 1976, including industrial supporting actions by large sections of the workers, is relatively well known.

> **There is no doubt that, taken as a whole, the Soweto events have opened a new chapter in the history of the revolutionary struggle.**

As always, during popular upsurges, the people themselves "provide an astonishing amount of new material for an appraisal of the slogans of revolutionary parties" (Lenin, *Selected Works*, p. 457).

The inventiveness and ingenuity of the youth in particular showed boundless revolutionary imagination. Throughout the period, tactics were varied and new forms of maintaining the pressure were found. At the beginning, the children of Soweto simply faced police bullets and flushed away the tear gas with water, or bravely hurled back the cannisters. Later, more sophisticated actions were evolved.

The youth soon learnt the folly of facing Vorster's terrorists in the open streets in large numbers and they switched to operating in small groups under the cover of darkness. Many police vehicles and "Hippos" were ambushed and destroyed. Barricades were erected to slow down the enemy and to provide cover in time of attack. Home-made incendiary devices were quickly in evidence. The people also turned their attention to the government collaborators amongst them and to the police informers. The organized destruction of property which symbolized the racist system of oppression was carried out by well-planned actions of small organized units.

There was an early recognition by the youth that to succeed they needed to mobilize the support of their parents and the mass of the workers, and this culminated in the three stirring solidarity strikes by the working class in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The young demonstrators learnt to use the tactic of subterfuge to take the struggle out of the black township and to show the people's anger right in the heart of cities like Cape Town. There, the whole population had a taste of the savagery and brutality of the racist armed forces. This tactic was quickly taken up by the youth of Soweto who, despite the ubiquitous BOSS network, secretly assembled at strategic points and marched on John Vorster Square, taking the police by surprise.

There were periods during the upsurge when the racist law-enforcement agencies were partly paralyzed, making pass raids and rent collection impossible, and making it dangerous for Bantu Administration officials, isolated groups of policemen etc. to walk the streets or to have any contact with the people.

Soweto closed the debate about the legitimacy of resorting to the armed struggle.

It made it abundantly clear to the world and the racist regime that our people have reached a stage where they are no longer prepared to behave like sheep led to the slaughter house; they are no longer prepared to let other people decide their fate as if they were inanimate objects.

Like the Angolan intervention, the Soweto revolt exposed the vulnerability of the South African ruling clique. Whilst Angola destroyed the myth of the South African military invincibility, Soweto demolished the myth that the government's security forces are able to destroy the people's revolutionary spirit.

An indelible mark has been made on the revolutionary and political consciousness of our people by the Soweto events. They raised the level of the people's preparedness and willingness to sacrifice to a higher level, enhancing enormously the striking power of the liberation movement.

Soweto – Some Important Questions

But it is necessary to assess carefully the significance of these events, and to deal with certain questions which are relevant to the future conduct of our struggle.

Who organized and led the upsurge? Was it only a youth revolt or did it involve wider class forces? What was the role of the ideology of Black consciousness? Why did the organized liberation movement not arm the people, and so transform the street confrontations into effective insurrection? Were the conditions ripe for a successful nationwide revolutionary assault, needing only the element of more effective revolutionary leadership? These are the questions being discussed both inside and outside our movement, by some who seek to learn from the experience of the events, and by others who wish to use them only to smear and belittle the liberation movement.

Yet it is our duty to face and answer these questions without any defensiveness against reactionary snipers, black or white. We must be on our guard, too, against emotional and immature approaches which confuse analysis with propaganda and which avoid a frank discussion of some of the objective and subjective limitations of these events, for fear that such a discussion will diminish the scale of the people's heroism and sacrifice and underestimate their potential for future revolutionary advance. On the contrary, we believe that an awareness of these limitations will equip us all the better to channel and increase the intensity of the new revolutionary energies which have undoubtedly emerged.

We have already said that the conditions which triggered off the Soweto events had their roots in a growing socio-economic crisis. But it is necessary to be clear on the magnitude of this crisis and to be more precise on the extent of the people's responses to it. It is important, then, to note the following inter-related factors:

a. Despite the difficulties experienced by the enemy's law enforcement agencies in a few of the townships, the enemy and the organs of the state power were not in such a state of collapse or disruption that the capacity of the ruling class to act cohesively and to contain militant actions, had been broken. The actions of a revolutionary movement, however well-organized, are not sufficient *on their own* to create a classical revolutionary situation. This, as Lenin has said, comes about through the maturing of special objective and subjective factors.

b. The actions themselves although widely spread were neither altogether nation-wide in character nor did they involve the mass of the rural people. In two of the major urban centres, those around

Johannesburg and Cape Town, the workers responded in large numbers, but primarily as an act of solidarity, without raising any independent demands on the issue of state power. The relatively weak response from the countryside reflects a very low level of rural liberation organization. In the towns, too, the limited response in many areas (Natal, Eastern Cape and the OFS were relatively quiet) suggests an urgent need to improve levels of political and economic organization, and of mobilization, especially at the point of production.

c. The people remain unarmed, and this fact obviously reduces the possibility of transforming the demonstration into an effective assault on state power.

d. The political general strike has a prime place in our revolutionary tactics. It is, however, fallacious to believe that, in the absence of general insurrectionary conditions, the working class can be expected to "starve" the ruling class into political submission by protracted withdrawal of labour. We remain convinced that in the appropriate conditions, generalized industrial action will be one of the most decisive factors in the struggle for people's power.

The question remains: why after sixteen years in which we have prepared for armed struggle, was the armed wing of the liberation movement unable to arm the people, or to ensure that the popular demonstrations would be combined with effective armed activity against the regime's army and police force?

The movement of which we are part has never been shy to examine critically its weaknesses, mistakes or failures. In previous analyses of the history of our attempts to begin armed struggle, we focussed attention on these weaknesses some of which continued into the recent period and undoubtedly limited our movement's ability to rise more effectively to the occasion. But mistakes apart, it is clear that the most serious obstacle to this aspect of our policy has been the extremely difficult and unfavourable internal and external conditions in which we have been forced to operate.

We have already stressed that radical changes in Southern Africa have substantially altered the geography of our struggle. This factor, together with the qualitatively new mood of defiance and resistance within our country, has undoubtedly created radically new and more favourable conditions for armed activity. But such activity cannot arise simply through overnight response to a changed political situation. Perhaps this problem can be more clearly understood if we recall that it was only its own experience in the Soweto and post-Soweto events themselves which taught the new generation of fighting youth the need to become part of an organized national liberation force, the need to create well-organized underground networks, and the need to learn the skills required if the enemy is to be dealt with effectively. To translate all this into new levels of revolutionary practice needs new effort and preparation by our liberation movement. In this sense the Soweto events have become an important launching pad for raising the struggle to a new level.

The events could not, in themselves, have been transformed into a successful all-round armed uprising even if adequate stocks of weapons had been available. We must not play with the idea of an armed uprising by treating it as a question only of logistics and organization.

Nor could the slogan "Arm the people", which has such a revolutionary ring, have had real meaning in the absence of prior preparation of organized liberation-military structures within the country. The absence of these structures *in sufficient strength* when Soweto erupted is not the result of ineffective planning; it is more closely connected with the adverse conditions in which such planning had to take place in the pre-Soweto decade.

Peoples' armed conflict is a protracted process. Even though conditions now exist for the struggle to be extended enormously, we must not be tempted by the passion and excitement of the moment to spread a dangerous and damaging illusion that it will be short and swift. The enemy backed by imperialism still possesses considerable strength and resources. There is no doubt, however, that the new situation has brought closer than ever before the possibility of an effective beginning to the armed struggle. And there is already public evidence that units of Umkhonto we Sizwe have begun to act against the enemy.

Soweto and our Liberation Movement

What was the link between the Soweto upsurge and our liberation movement, and its long traditions of sacrifice and resistance? On the one hand, the regime has repeatedly claimed that the demonstrations were manipulated by "agitators" connected with the ANC and our Party. On the other hand, some critics of our movement totally deny the influence of its organized underground and its ideology on the events.

The demonstration of June 16 was called by SASM, a national school-student organization which had been campaigning for some years on the issue of Bantu Education. But it is clear that what started as a protest by school students against the government's educational policies, soon extended to broader sections of the people and advanced wider demands. Although it remained essentially a youth revolt, it would be wrong to see it in purely generational terms, as if youth constitute an independent social force separate from the basic line-up of national and class forces. Such an approach is neither factually correct nor does it help to understand the role of the students in the coming struggle for people's power. Already, some are insisting that this new force of "student power" will lead the people to victory. This same kind of theoretical confusion was spread after the 1968 French events when it was claimed that students now stand in the vanguard of the revolution and that a contradiction exists between the "revolutionism" of the students and the "conservatism" and "moderation" of the older generations including the working class.

The overwhelming majority of those who organized and took part in the demonstrations came from working class homes and they were encouraged in their actions by their parents. Many of the teachers played an important supporting role. Amongst those who participated in the street confrontations from the very beginning were substantial numbers of non-students including thousands of unemployed working youth. Figures provided by the Johannesburg State pathologist on those killed by the police between 18 June and 18 August in the Johannesburg-West Rand area showed that approximately 50 per cent were over 20 years of age, and 20 per cent were over 30 years of age. A major high point of the action was the three protest strikes in the six weeks between August and the middle of September. When the full saga of Soweto can be recorded without concern for security, it will be shown that soon after the initial demonstration, the whole Soweto community became involved in the ferment.

SASM itself was at all times an independent organization. Although SASO influenced its formation, it was not run by SASO, the BPC or our liberation front, even though the ideological influences of all three organizations were present amongst its leaders. We have already noted that what started as a successful protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction soon expressed some of the broader aims of the national democratic revolution. The placards and slogans began to reflect the basic questions of race oppression and peoples' power. The ANC's slogan of *Amandla!* became an important password to distinguish friend from foe in the streets of struggle. From the early stages there is evidence that some of SASM's leaders turned to known activists of the ANC for advice and co-ordination. Since then, many more have joined the ranks of the liberation movement and its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. During this period the ANC, through its propaganda apparatus and in other ways, helped mobilize supporting actions including a call in support of the strikes.

This brief outline is not advanced in order to suggest that the ANC organized or led the upsurge. Indeed, as it developed, the revolt showed the marks of all popular upsurges which usually combine organized actions with others which are spontaneous and semi-spontaneous. Nor is it intended to claim that our underground had achieved such a peak of strength that it was able to provide the necessary leadership at all the points of eruption. But it is clear that, both historically and in the more immediate sense, the ANC-led resistance movement was an important cornerstone of the upsurge. Its leadership in the immediate future will be the key factor in consolidating and advancing the revolutionary energies which have emerged. Certainly, Vorster and his allies have no illusions on this score. And this explains the heightened campaign of terror against the ANC underground and the increased attempts to isolate it externally.

The Role of Black Consciousness

We have, in a previous document, emphasized that the term "Black Consciousness" does not, in itself, express a coherent programme or a strategy of struggle, still less a systematic ideology. Those who claim to be its adherents do not belong to a common organization and they express a wide range of conflicting definitions of its content. Its very vagueness, organisationally and ideologically, makes it difficult to give complete answers about its impact on the Soweto upsurge.

But vague as it is, Black Consciousness undoubtedly acted as an inspiration to some patriots who understood it as a general assertion of national identity, pride and confidence, as a healthy response to the insulting arrogance of the white supremacists, and as a contribution to the psychological liberation of the African people. Understood in this way, it expresses an approach which was pioneered by the African National Congress and our Party and developed in the course of revolutionary practice. The mobilization of the national energies of the black oppressed remains an indispensable weapon in the hands of the liberation movement. In this sense Black Consciousness is a vital constituent of the ideology of our liberation struggle.

It certainly acted as a "conscientizing" agent and contributed to the revitalized surge of national feeling, especially amongst the youth.

But as a substitute for scientific social analysis, and as an alternative to the ideology of our liberation front, it becomes a harmful demagogic cliche. (Who is a patriot, Matanzima or Bram Fischer?) Those who apply the concept in this way, see the forces ranged against one another in our struggle only in colour compartments and they ignore the special character of the economic and class basis of South African racism. They fail to provide any guidelines for a real strategy of social change, on the fundamental nature of the forces (including black forces) from whom the enemy hopes to win collaboration, and the character of those classes and groups which can be neutralized or mobilized in favour of the liberation struggle. Used in place of genuine revolutionary doctrine, Black Consciousness is a misleading ideology and weakens the cause which it purports to serve – the cause of national liberation. Recent events in Southern Africa – in Angola and elsewhere – have shown once again that merely paying lip-service to black nationalism is not the same as advancing the national cause and it is often a camouflage for those whose actions serve the enemy. The Savimbis and the Robertos trumpeted very loudly about their "black nationalism" in their efforts to discredit the MPLA's principled adherence to non-racialism.

An ideology which proclaims colour as its sole foundation can more easily obscure the real issues because of its highly charged emotional content. For this reason Black Consciousness cannot appropriately express the vigorous revolutionary nationalism of our liberation movement.

Black Collaboration

The internal situation continues to be a political powder-keg. The sustained resistance and the people's militant mood are aggravating the political and economic difficulties of the ruling class which is searching for ways of diverting the revolutionary pressures. The primary weapons against the people and our liberation movement remain brute force and administrative terror. But there is also an attempt to take measures and to use language which give the appearance of a retreat from aspects of race discrimination whilst leaving undisturbed, and even reinforcing, the main framework of race and economic exploitation.

In this way, the ruling class hopes to reduce external pressures and, in the language of counter-insurgency, to win the battle for the hearts and minds of the people. But the enemy's strategy is not confined to sweet talk and petty reforms – both of which have so far made little impression. It hopes also to win the collaboration of groups amongst the oppressed whose economic and social status give them an interest in preventing a genuine revolutionary change.

A key element in this strategy is the creation in the Bantustan neo-colonies of an administrative elite and a class of petty capitalists entirely dependent on the racist state and its exploitative designs. In so-called white South Africa, whilst the massacres in the streets continue, a number of "liberal" concessions have been made to win the support of the black middle class. Some restrictions on the business operations of Indian and Coloured traders have been eased. The government has promised more facilities for African traders in the black townships. An Indian bank and an African bank have been established, both in partnership with existing banking institutions. Certain of the limitations on black home ownership have been lifted.

The various black Chambers of Commerce have established close links with their white counterparts. At the political level institutions have been created – the Coloured Persons' Representative Council, the South African Indian Council, and lately, the Inter-Cabinet Council – which aim to involve upper-crust blacks in Apartheid administration. The purpose of these measures was clearly spelt out by the Transvaal Chamber of Industries in a memorandum to the Prime Minister on August 27, 1976:

> "The urban Black middle class must be won over to the side of the Whites in order to contain, on a long-term basis, the irresponsible economic and political activities of the blacks who are influenced against their real interests from within and without our borders".

These views were echoed in a speech by a leading African trader at a recent business conference. He appealed for the lifting of existing business restrictions against blacks and stated that if the government did so,

> "The black community will see the emergence of a middle class which will serve as a bulwark against any political uprising in our country". *(SAIRR Survey 1976.)*

It is from within the Black middle class that the ruling class seeks support for the "responsible" alternative to the radical policies of our liberation movement. Apart from economic concessions, it has also sharpened its ideological campaigns to detach this middle class from the mainstream of our national movement in the hope that its influence and status will be used to win over other black classes for reformist rather than revolutionary policies.

The attack on the social aims of our liberation front has become more intense and is designed to spread the distortion that the small black middle class has more to lose than to gain from genuine peoples' power in a united South Africa.

On its own, the crude anti-ANC, anti-Communist and anti-Soviet propaganda of the Vorster regime can find little response. Its record of racist brutality is so clear that even the most right-wing black quislings find it embarrassing to be caught in the act of open collaboration with it. But the strategy of our ruling class is advanced not only by the actions of its state apparatus, but also by some who pose as liberators and as champions of black freedom. They use all the nationalist catch-phrases such as "Black Power", "one man one vote", "majority rule" etc., but advocate policies which objectively serve the enemy. The ruling class has been joined by these elements in a campaign to weaken the influence of the ANC and the liberation front which it heads, and to prevent an effective assault on racist power. The meeting point between enemy strategy and the activities of these elements is illustrated by the following examples:

Recently the US State Department announced that it was preparing scholarship places in US educational institutions for the hundreds of young militants who escaped from South Africa to find new ways of continuing the struggle. Shortly afterwards, Tsietsi Mashinini, one of the young Soweto militants, toured the United States and made a similar appeal for educational places, claiming that such training was necessary to make Africans fit for majority rule. He then went to Botswana to recruit young exiles for US academic institutions and appealed to them not to join the ANC's armed wing for military training. (*World*, 21.1.1977) Drake Koka, the general secretary of the Black Allied Workers' Union, in an interview with *Free Labour* (January-February 1977) the organ of the ICFTU, when asked, "what is your attitude to Young's statement that the US will launch a programme for training South African blacks to fit them for majority rule", replied that it was an "excellent project" because "responsible leadership" was needed in South Africa. Koka claims inspiration from the ideology of Black Consciousness.

Buthulezi uses the same language of white liberalism which searches for change without people's power and which rationalizes its fear of genuine liberation by claiming that the masses are not yet ready to run the country. He warned publicly that

> "The very same powers which will destroy Apartheid will create a situation of ungovernability in post-Apartheid South Africa",
> and
> "We will not do anything in the name of liberation which will result in the defeat of Apartheid but at the same time reduce South Africa to an ungovernable conglomerate of conflicting interests. It is too high a price to pay for liberation". (*Sunday Tribune*, 23 January, 1977.)

At the height of the Soweto disturbances in August 1976, the leaders or representatives of all the Homeland governments, except the

Transkei, met to discuss the situation. After the meeting the convenor, Professor Hudson Ntsanwisi of Gazankulu, issued a joint statement to the press. "Whilst understanding the impatience of the youth", it was stated, "the Homeland leaders could not condone the wanton destruction of property". (*SAIRR Survey, 1976,* p. 26).

In October 1976 a meeting was held in Soweto attended by Bantustan chiefs Buthulezi, Ntsanwisi and Pathudi with "fifty leading African politicians, civic leaders, trade unionists, professional men and women, student leaders and representatives of the Black Consciousness movement". The meeting elected a steering committee under the chairmanship of Dr. S.M. Nyembezi with aims which included the establishment of a "disciplined black community and to work for the emergence of a true black leadership". (*SAIRR Survey, 1976*)

The racists undoubtedly welcome this kind of language. After all, they have been warning incessantly about the "irresponsible" black leadership, about the chaos into which South Africa will sink if the ANC and its allies gain power, and about how unready the blacks are for majority rule.

On the question of our armed strategy for struggle this "responsible" black leadership also plays into the enemy's hands. In our situation the argument against armed struggle is an argument either for no change at all, or for the kind of change which will guarantee continued domination by the ruling class in a new form. Harry Oppenheimer showed that he clearly understands this argument when he warned the London Stock Exchange (May 15th, 1976) that the basic question is the survival of "private enterprise" and that,

> "It is quite wrong to suppose as is often suggested that all that is at issue here is whether the same solution is to be reached by peaceful means or by bloodshed. The important point to bear in mind is that any peaceful solution would be an entirely different solution from any solution that is imposed by force."

It is this "entirely different solution" which is being worked for in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa by the Carters, the Owens, the Smiths and the Vorsters. And, in our case, reaction's efforts are reinforced by those within the black communities who either misguidedly or deliberately work against our liberation front's policy of combining mass political action with armed struggle.

The Black Middle Class – Its Role In Our Struggle

Despite the fact that most of these compromising gestures have come from members of the black middle class, we believe that the majority of this class can be won over for the aims of our liberation. Indeed, those of its members who continue to support and join our struggle cannot, for obvious reasons, openly identify with it, nor are their views publicised by a press controlled by the oppressors. During the Soweto events numerous traders, teachers and other professional groups sided with the people.

But in any case, the more fundamental question is whether the objective economic and social position of the black middle class as a whole will lead the majority of its members to become permanent allies of the ruling class. Posed in another way, the question is whether the aims of our national movement continue to represent the aspirations of all the main classes within the ranks of the oppressed – workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie. To this question we give a positive answer.

The main content of the present phase of our struggle continues to be the national democratic revolution to destroy internal colonialism. We believe that the achievement of this aim is in the interest not only of the black workers and peasants, but also of the black petty bourgeoisie.

But, like the petty bourgeoisie everywhere, it tends to vacillate between the ruling and exploited classes, depending partly upon the strength of the main antagonists in the struggle. The heightening by our liberation movement of confrontation with the ruling state will thus also help win over sections of the middle class.

We should bear in mind, too, that the middle and upper classes amongst the black groups (those already in existence and those in the process of formation) are not of exactly the same mould. For example, it is necessary to examine separately those in the Bantustans and those outside, and even within each group, to distinguish the strata which are more closely dependent on white patronage. There is already evidence that in the Bantustans the black upper crust is becoming an institutionalized instrument of the people's exploitation by the ruling class, and is progressively driven into the enemy camp. In the rest of South Africa the black petty bourgeoisie consists mainly of small businessmen, professional groups, those occupying minor administrative posts and low-level business executive positions, and so on. Each of these groups is, in different ways, torn between the complex of contradictory economic and political pressures, resulting in inconsistent responses to the regime. But they will, more often than not, find themselves at loggerheads with the ruling class whom they can serve only in an auxiliary capacity. Even when their economic position has improved, colour still determines the outside limit of their economic growth. In their daily life they will still come up against all the humiliations which every black experiences. Unlike the petty-bourgeoisie elsewhere there is a total racist bar against their entry into the higher political and economic preserves of the privileged minority.

The consolidation of a broad liberation unity – cutting across simple class lines – does not imply that we ignore the different levels of commitment and degrees of consistency of the various class forces within the alliance.

It is clear that the dominant force in this alliance must be the working class and it is their supremacy in the new state form which will emerge after victory, which will prevent our revolution from grinding to a halt at the point of a formal political take-over.

The Working Class and our Party

In the coming struggle for power the working class has a special role to play. The economic struggles of the past few years and the recent successful political strikes, have provided it with new confidence in its organized strength. This strength must be used to press home the demand for the right to strike, the right to free trade union organization, and above all, to advance the aims of the national liberation struggle.

In alliance with the working class and poor peasants in the countryside, the black proletariat is the must uncompromising enemy of race and class oppression and the most powerful force for national liberation. The working class gains nothing but misery from the Bantustans which are used as an excuse to deprive it of all rights and to hound it in the cities built by its labour. It has nothing to gain from the kind of liberation which gives a few blacks the opportunity to share in the people's exploitation. For the black working class, the biggest and most exploited section of the oppressed majority, there is only one way out – the complete defeat of racist supremacy and the creation of a people's government which will put South Africa on the road to socialism. There is little meaning in a liberation which does not destroy the economic power of the ruling class and the state apparatus which protects it. To ensure this kind of liberation requires a strongly organized working class with a special role in the alliance of political forces against the minority dictatorship.

The black working class must be on its guard against attempts by the white trade union movement to control the growth of black workers' organizations in industry. There can be no collaboration with those who side with the ruling class to ensure the maximum exploitation of the black workers. We believe in the true unity of all workers – African, Indian, Coloured and White. But there must be real equality and majority control. It is only when the white workers stop collaborating with our class enemy and act as part of a united working class that they will be welcomed as brothers.

The only trade union centre which has stood for genuine democracy and non-racialism in the trade union movement is the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Despite SACTU's formal legality, its principled adherence to the policies of the ANC-led liberation front has made it a target of intense persecution which has seriously interfered with its efforts to develop its organizational strength. It is necessary to search for ways of overcoming these obstacles. The tasks of building SACTU, strengthening genuine trade unions and creating effective factory organization need special study. It is, for example, necessary to examine more closely the use that can be made of the factory and liaison committee system, depending on actual conditions in the specific industry and factory. The building of legal trade unions in fascist conditions calls for a flexible application of general policy. This aspect of our policy is dealt with in greater detail in a separate document.

Our Party and the Liberation Alliance

The struggle of the black workers cannot be separated from the wider struggle against racist oppression. The indivisible link which exists between class and national oppression in our country explains the need for a strong Communist Party and a well-organized trade union movement as part of the liberation alliance headed by the African National Congress. As already emphasized, this alliance is not only in the interests of the working class but also of all patriots; any attempts to weaken it will damage the prospects for revolutionary change in South Africa. Our Party has no immediate political aims separate from the aims of the national liberation movement headed by the ANC.

We stand united by the immediate and foremost task – the destruction of racist domination and the achievement of the aims of the National Democratic revolution whose main content is the liberation of the African majority and other oppressed black groups. We share, too, the belief that there can be no true liberation in South Africa without the destruction of the politicial and economic power of our ruling class and without people's control of the basic means of production.

Experience has proved, over and over again, that in our revolution collaboration between our two organizations has raised the level of the struggle and has been a mutually reinforcing influence. The two fundamental streams of revolutionary consciousness – national and class – have made an important impact upon one another and have enriched the indigenous application of the universal trughts of revolutionary ideology.

Our claim that we are a vanguard party of the working class is in the indigenous application of the universal truths of revolutionary ideology.

Our claim that we are a vanguard party of the working class is in no way diminished by our close association with the national liberation front headed by the African National Congress. A Communist Party does not earn the honoured title of vanguard merely by proclaiming it. For example, a working class Party does not exercise its vanguard role in relation to trade unions by capturing them or transforming them into wings of the Party, but rather by proving that the Party and its individual members are the most ideologically clear and the most devoted and loyal participants in the workers' cause. The same principle applies to a situation such as ours in which the main immediate instrument for the achievement of the aims of our national democratic revolution is a mass movement capable of galvanizing all classes in an assault on racist power. The African National Congress *is* such an instrument and our loyal participation in the liberation front which it heads is in the best interests of the class whose vanguard we claim to be. This collaboration is not, as Vorster and some of his black collaborators allege, a ploy to "capture" the other bodies which are part of the alliance. We have always fought, and shall continue to fight for the complete independence and organizational integrity of the mass movements. Those of our members who have earned positions as mass leaders of the national movement have proved over and over again their devotion to, and respect for, the decisions of the democratically elected collectives of which they have been part.

In the same way we continue to assert the absolute right of our Party to exist as an independent organization and to continue to exercise its public role as the advance vanguard of the working class. In the period under review our Party underground has been strengthened and has continued to provide a flow of propaganda and agitational material both in support of the immediate aims of the liberation front and to spread the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Amongst these activities have been the regular circulation of an illegal edition of the *African Communist* and a special internal cyclostyled theoretical journal *Inkululeko-Freedom*. We have also circulated basic Marxist classics (some translated into African languages) and, following on the decisions of our last

Central Committee meeting, a special message to The Workers of South Africa from our Party was widely distributed. It is obviously not possible in this document to elaborate fully the organizational tasks facing our Party in the internal situation and the measures required in order to carry them out. These have been reviewed and appropriate decisions have been taken.

THE WAY AHEAD

Despite the regime's mobilization of greater and greater force, the mass killings and the increasing use of terror and torture, the people remain unbowed. Indeed, they stand ready, as never before, to respond to a lead which will raise the struggle above the level of street confrontation which, on its own, cannot lead to victory. Such a lead can only come from our liberation front, headed by the ANC, which is accepted by friend and foe alike as the most serious threat and challenge to racist oppression and exploitation. We have earned this honoured role because of a long history of dedication to the revolutionary cause. Even during the difficult days when little seemed possible we continued to stand up to the enemy and to keep the flame of resistance alive. The heroism and sacrifice of our militants, especially during the recent struggle-filled decades has added a new dimension to the long saga of the South African freedom struggle.

It is our movement which ushered in the new era of organized armed resistance and created its chief instrument, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

Despite vicious hounding, our revolutionary cadres have maintained and even strengthened our underground which has once again begun engaging the enemy in direct actions and has stepped up its political mobilization of the people.

It is no accident that the Vorsters and the Krugers select the ANC and our Party as the chief targets for attack. They have taken note of the fact that since Soweto, of all the movements who claim an underground presence, it is only ours which was able to strike at the enemy at all and to play an important part in mobilizing political support for the youth upsurge. They know, too, that the majority of our youth in search of an underground capable of leading them both militarily and politically, are finding it in our liberation movement.

Above all, our movement is feared because we are committed to an ideology which aims to destroy not only every part of the framework of national oppression but also the

foundations of economic inequality and exploitation on which that framework has been built.

At the beginning of the 1960's the people taught us that it was necessary to break with the strategy of the previous decade and to begin preparing conditions for combining political resistance with armed actions. The recent upsurge has emphasised that, given effective organization and leadership, the revolutionary energies of the people have a limitless potential. Through their own experience in the recent struggles the people have begun to understand, more clearly than ever before, both the necessity and possibility of a revolutionary way forward in which victory will eventually be theirs through a combination of mass political resistance and organized armed struggle.

Failure on the part of our liberation movement to respond effectively during the coming period will put at risk the present high mood of militancy and lead to a demoralization which will make it easier for the imperialist alliance to implement its plans for Southern Africa and for Vorster to successfully divert the formidable pressures which have built up inside our country.

Our liberation front clearly faces a historic challenge, and our Party, as part of this front, is called upon – as never before – to mobilize all its strength to help meet it.

Our Tasks

1. A general analysis of the new potential which exists to advance the struggle is only a starting point. Especially in a fluid situation, such as we have at the moment, a specific response may be appropriate for one day and may already be too late for the next.

It follows that the strengthening of the whole movement's underground presence – especially at leadership levels – is one of the vital keys to success.

Slogans such as "Raise the struggle to a higher level", "Vary the tactics of resistance and assault", etc. can only be translated into revolutionary practice by those who are in the very heart of the ferment. For example, the specific question of whether, when, for how long, and on what slogans to call a general political strike, is a question of the moment and calls for an experienced leadership with a day-to-day presence among the people. The exact forms of legal and illegal organization and the elaboration of new and changing techniques for hitting the enemy, depend often on specific local and regional conditions which can usually only be understood by those on the spot.

2. Soweto confirmed that the black working class is the most decisive revolutionary force. This class once again revealed its collective strength and underlined the close relationship between national and class struggle in our conditions. Our Party, as the Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working class, has a special duty to arouse further its revolutionary consciousness and to sharpen its awareness of its historic mission as the dominant force in the struggle for national liberation and the building of a Socialist society.

We are thus called upon to support and initiate new efforts to organize the working class both economically and politically, especially at the point of production, and to spread the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism. We must spare no effort in the work of strengthening our Party underground, safeguarding our Party's independence and maintaining its important role as part of the liberation alliance.

3. The crucial role of the revolutionary student and working youth was also highlighted during the recent events. The experience of these struggles has begun to teach them that the key to people's power is revolutionary organization guided by a scientific theory of revolution. They are turning in increasing numbers to our liberation alliance and to its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. More and more of them are moving closer to the ideas of scientific socialism and towards a more mature grasp of the close relationship between national and class struggle in our conditions.

It is our duty to build upon this rising consciousness amongst the youth and to spread an even deeper understanding of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It is the duty of our liberation movement as a whole to give the mass movements which have arisen amongst the youth, and which played such a key role in sparking off the mass upsurge, a clear revolutionary political and organizational content.

4. We have noted that there were very few organized responses in the rural areas during the Soweto ferment. We cannot properly speak of a national upsurge which does not also involve the bulk of our people who work on the white farms or are herded into the so-called homelands.

An urgent task which therefore faces our liberation move-

ment is the mobilization and organization of the mass of our people in the countryside.
This task is all the more urgent in view of the frantic activities of the racist regime to advance its Bantustan programme and to break the unity of the African people by the establishment of these puppet tribal administrations with the help of black collaborators.

5. **We must work, too, for the maximum unity in action of the Coloured and Indian people with their African brothers.**
Events in Cape Town dramatically demonstrated the readiness of the African and Coloured youth to move in unison in battles against racist force. This same solidarity was displayed by the Coloured workers. But elsewhere, the Coloured and Indian youth and working class were not sufficiently mobilized in supporting actions. The wave of strikes which began in Natal in 1972 showed an impressive degree of unity between all the oppressed black groups – a unity which has to be mobilized further if the enemy is to feel the full strength of the oppressed masses.

6. Whilst we do not regard women as constituting a distinct social force, we recognize the continuing need to mobilize them not only as equal participants in the liberation struggle as a whole, but also as a group which carries a triple burden of oppression and exploitation – as workers, as black workers and as black women workers. Our history has proved over and over again that our women do not stand in second place when it comes to revolutionary dedication, heroism and sacrifice.
It is vital, therefore, to strengthen revolutionary women's organization and to ensure full participation by the oppressed women at all levels of the liberation movement's political and military structures.

7. The white group as a whole, including the white working class, continues to stand in broad support of the regime's racist policies. But the political and economic crisis which faces the ruling class is also emphasizing some of the secondary divisions within it. It is our duty always to exploit such contradictions in order to weaken the cohesion of the enemy. It is our duty, too, to encourage those within the white community who begin to see that their only salvation lies through an unconditional commitment to the aims of our liberation movement. The brave actions of those white students in Johannesburg who, together with their black colleagues, demonstrated in a Soweto solidarity march, and the small group of progressive whites which is prepared to

support and even to join the freedom struggle, represent the long-term interests of all the people, including the white community.

We believe that the truly radical whites should be encouraged in their actions and that more energy should be devoted to bringing about a realization amongst the whites that Vorster is leading them – Hitler-like – towards destruction.

8. During the course of the historic months of resistance, all pacifist illusions and talk of non-violent change – so assiduously fostered by imperialist interests, the liberals, the Bantustan stooges and other collaborators among our people – have been totally shattered by the reality of the regime's bloody repression. It is now clearer than ever to our people that the only answer to the brute violence of our ruling class is the organized might of the masses, directed and led by the national liberation movement, in which armed struggle must play a key role.

It is, therefore, one of the supreme tasks of our revolutionary alliance to ensure that the armed struggle establishes firm roots in every part of our country.

9. Because of the insecurity of the black middle classes which, like their counterparts throughout the world, have a natural tendency to vacillate between the exploiters and the exploited, the racist regime is attempting to win their collaboration in order to divert the revolutionary pressures.

We firmly believe, however, that the bulk of the black middle classes can be mobilised to the side of the people, and it is the duty of our movement to do so.

10. The feeling of revulsion against South Africa's institutionalised system of racism has grown considerably in the last few decades. The world-wide solidarity campaigns have not only helped to increase the isolation of the racist regime but have also provided important material and moral support for our struggling people. We express our warm appreciation to the various anti-apartheid groups and movements who continue to devote themselves to this important task. As a party we also regard it as one of our primary duties to mobilise our brother parties in the international communist movement to continue to lend all possible support to the mobilisation of their peoples in effective solidarity action.

11. A large group of some of the most important leaders of our whole liberation movement – including many members of our Central Committee – have now been languishing in Robben Island and Vorster's other prisons for close on 15 years. The freeing of these great heroes in our struggle remains one of our primary duties.

It is therefore vital that we intensify both national and international campaigns demanding the release of all political prisoners.

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WE EMBARK ON ALL THESE TASKS IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE ROAD FROM SOWETO TO PRETORIA IS STILL AN ARDUOUS ONE, DEMANDING GREAT DEDICATION, HEROISM AND SACRIFICE. BUT WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT OUR WHOLE LIBERATION MOVEMENT CAN ARISE TO THE HISTORIC CHALLENGE WHICH THE NEW SITUATION PRESENTS, AND LEAD OUR REVOLUTIONARY MASSES TOWARDS A UNITED PEOPLE'S SOUTH AFRICA IN WHICH ALL FORMS OF RACISM WILL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED AND WHICH WILL CREATE A SOCIETY FREE OF ALL FORMS OF EXPLOITATION OF MAN BY MAN.

LONG LIVE THE SPIRIT OF SOWETO!
LONG LIVE OUR GREAT
SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY!
LONG LIVE THE GREAT
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS!
LONG LIVE LIBERATION UNITY!
LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

What Proletarian Internationalism means to Africa

by A. AZAD

> **"Bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism – these are the two irreconcilably hostile slogans that correspond to the two great class camps throughout the capitalist world, and express the two** policies **(nay, the two world outlooks) in the national question"** (1).

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"Workers of all lands unite" was the brilliant, incisive and dynamizing slogan coined by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto. This was the beginning and rallying point of proletarian internationalism. Since the time of Marx and Engels all the major events in the history of the international working class occurred under the influence of proletarian internationalism. At every stage of historical development proletarian internationalism is confronted with new difficulties and contradictions. Marxist-Leninists always take into account what is new, discard the obsolete and pay the greatest attention to the objective demands of our epoch. Thus following the October Revolution, Lenin coined the slogan "Workers of all lands and peoples subjected to oppression unite".

The form and content of working-class solidarity in the current world revolutionary process is expressed in the 1969 meeting of the World Communist Movement as:

> "Peoples of the Socialist countries, workers, democratic forces in the capitalist countries, newly liberated peoples and those who are oppressed, unite in a common struggle against imperialism, for peace, national liberation, social progress, democracy and socialism". (2)

Proletarian internationalism emerged from objective roots as the practical and theoretical embodiment of the vital necessity of the working class and all revolutionary forces to unite against capital which had become internationalized. At the present time when internationalisation of social life has become a dominant feature and the crimes of imperialism and exploitation by multi-national corporations have reached inhuman proportions, the unity in action of all the world's revolutionary forces is of paramount importance.

The bourgeoisie and their hired scribes, resorting to outright lies and distortions, spare no effort in denigrating the October Revolution and proletarian internationalism. From a qualitatively different position a few fraternal parties in Western Europe are also questioning the validity of proletarian internationalism at the present time. Thus in commemorating the 60th anniversary of the most profound social revolution ever witnessed it is appropriate to examine what we mean by proletarian internationalism and how it was evolved historically to the present period.

Marxist-Leninist methodology is a concrete, historic, dialectical approach which takes into account the changes that have occurred, but does not absolutise one historic stage or another. We have to pay special attention to those objective international factors which have such a profound influence on the development of the revolutionary process in every individual country. The primary one is the international balance of class forces which following the October Revolution is determined by the struggle on a world-wide scale to replace capitalism with socialism.

Class consciousness of workers is exceptionally complex and includes phenomena such as social-political, social psychological, ideological and ethical factors. Whatever the complexity, the highest form of working-class consciousness is the understanding of the common interests of the world-wide proletariat. Thus proletarian internationalism is the very core and heart of the relations between the component parts of the world communist movement, and the three basic revolutionary streams of our time – the world socialist system, national liberation movement and working class movements in the advanced capitalist countries.

The Main Properties

Proletarian internationalism contains a number of properties but we should only consider the main ones. These are:

(1) The unity and solidarity in deeds of the three main revolutionary streams for the common aim of destroying colonialism, fascism, racism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Even though the historic initiative has now passed into the hands of the revolutionary detachments, imperialism has great reserves of power and has not changed its aggressive and reactionary nature. To defeat imperialist aggression, manoeuvres and intrigues as the glorious examples of Vietnam and Angola show, requires the interaction and mutual support at the highest level of the three main revolutionary streams. This unity is equally of paramount significance as we enter the final and decisive phase to liberate Southern Africa from the yoke of colonialism, racism, imperialism and capitalism.

Ever since the beginning of armed revolutionary struggle the genuine national liberation movements in Africa have been armed, equipped, fed and clothed by the socialist countries. The growing and deepening co-operation of independent Africa, in particular those countries following socially progressive policies, and the socialist world is mutually beneficial and vitally important in the fight to limit the influence, expansion and capacity for action of world imperialism and neo-colonialism.

In the advanced capitalist countries the greater mobilisation of our struggle in Southern Africa will make it difficult if not impossible for the imperialist countries to intervene militarily on the side of the racists. Furthermore it could lead to the greater isolation of racist South Africa from the international community and be a primary factor in restraining fascist South Africa from unleashing a programme of mass genocide. This militant solidarity in which thousands upon thousands of people could be mobilised also creates further openings for the development of the broad anti-monopoly struggle in the capitalist countries and helps to educate the people in those countries about the predatory nature of imperialism.

It is therefore not surprising that the policy and ideology of the bourgeoisie is directed at slandering the principles of proletarian internationalism.

(2) The dialectical relationship between the national and international. Each revolutionary detachment has to contribute the maximum

effort to promote the world-wide struggle for national and social liberation. In those countries where the working people have conquered power their first internationalist duty is to construct socialist societies leading to communism.

The October Revolution brought into sharp focus the whole question of the interconnection between the needs and the demands of the national struggle and those of the international. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party demonstrated in practice that the class struggle is waged on an international scale, that it is impermissible to absolutise one or the other and that petty-bourgeois nationalism preserves intact national self-interest. A true internationalist, Lenin argued,

> ". . must *not* think only of one's own nation, but place *above it* the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality . . . he must fight against small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest." (3)

And in mercilessly exposing petty-bourgeois nationalism he said:

> " . . . proletarian internationlism demands, first that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and second that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital''. (4)

But we should not interpret what Lenin said mechanically and one-sidedly. Trotskyites and other petty-bourgeois revolutionists absolutize either the international or the national. The Trotskyites, blind to history and life itself, continue to claim that it was and is impossible to build socialism in one country. They are forever searching for the elusive simultaneous world-wide revolution, ignoring the law of the uneven development of capitalism, and at times unjustifiably relegating the importance of the national factor in the revolutionary process.

The National Question

To relegate the national factor is to postpone indefinitely the possibility of one or other national contingent of the international working class coming to power. Above all the primary task of each working class and its allies in the individual countries is to overthrow capitalism and replace it by socialism.

Let us note that Cuba's foreign policy is based on subordinating Cuban positions to the international requirements of the struggle for socialism and national liberation.

Where the working people led by their vanguard party are victorious, they must pursue those national and international policies that would strengthen the socialist base nationally, leading to the continuous improvement of the material and spiritual standards of their people and at the same time contributing within their capabilities the maximum effort to the world-wide struggle against imperialism, reaction and capitalism.

Indeed the spectacular successes scored by the revolutionary forces over the last sixty years are directly and indirectly linked to the creation and building of socialism in the Soviet Union. Given the present experience, only the very blinkered, right and ultra-left and anti-Soviet professionals, and anti-communists of every shade, will deny that the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, German Democratic Republic, and other Socialist states, whilst strengthening socialism in their own countries, have also made a vital contribution to the struggle against colonialism, racism, fascism, imperialism and capitalism.

Proletarian internationalism is also vital in resolving the national question especially where racism, chauvinism and jingoism are used by the capitalist class to divide the ranks of the working class. Writing of the early history of the liberation movement in South Africa (and let us add that it is equally true of the contemporary period) Francis Meli says:

> "In South Africa proletarian internationalism was not only the basis for relationship between different formations of the international working class movement, but was and remains a means to check tendencies of racial chauvinism and expressions of national exclusiveness and tribalism."

And later he shows how

> "proletarian internationalism was not only significant for practical politics but was above all an ideological weapon in the search for theoretical clarity on the *nature and character of the South African revolution*." (5)

(3) Pursuing domestic and foreign policies which lead to the defence and further strengthening of the world socialist systems, the creation of the international working class. The socialist countries are obliged to eliminate the remnants of nationalism and to work constantly and collectively for the deepest mutual co-operation and solidarity economically and politically. Socialist internationalism is a higher form of proletarian internationalism in which mutual support extends to the sphere of production and distribution of material wealth.

The fraternal assistance given to Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 is proof of the capacity and determination of world socialist systems led by the Soviet Union to defeat the plots and intrigues of imperialism and its agencies such as the CIA aided and encouraged by local counter-revolutionary elements.

It is useful to bear in mind that in 1919 Soviet power in Hungary was crushed by the interference of the capitalist countries in support of the local reactionary forces. At that time Soviet Russia was itself engaged in a life and death struggle against foreign aggression and as much as Lenin and the Bolshevik Party wanted to assist, their ability to do so was limited by objective conditions. At the present time the imperialists are not sitting with their hands folded but carry on all kinds of subversive activities against the socialist countries and against revolutionary states such as Chile, Mozambique and Angola. To crush the international tentacles of imperialism we require proletarian internationalism not in words but deeds.

There is also an obligation on the vanguard parties of the working class to defend the world socialist system. A fundamental criterion of proletarian internationalism remains defence of the Soviet Union. At the time when the young Soviet Russia was fighting for its very survival from attacks launched by imperialism and internal counter-revolutionary forces, a powerful "Hands off Russia" campaign developed in the capitalist countries. This was the first successful manifestation of internationalism at its highest level. Thousands and thousands of former prisoners of war in Russia fought in the Red Army from 1917-1920. Furthermore, in 1921 workers in Czechoslovakia, Austria and other capitalist countries eagerly responded to Lenin's appeal for assistance.

Thus unlike the time of the Paris Commune Russia was prepared nationally and the working class internationally to defeat the dark forces of reaction and aggression.

Other equally important principles of proletarian internationalism such as the struggle for peace, peaceful co-existence and detente, defence of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the strengthening of the International Communist Movement will be considered later.

Historical Evolution

Marx and Engels were in the forefront of forming the International Working Men's Association also known as the First International in 1866. It was Marx who formulated the Inaugural Address and Statutes of the International. Given the diverse composition, various trends and low levels of international solidarity the First International would have collapsed had it not been for the tireless activities and guiding leadership of Marx. Six congresses of the International were held from 1866 to 1872 at which often fierce debates took place over the principles, strategy and tactics of the working class struggle nationally and internationally. In the battle against the anarchist followers of Bakhunin Marx insisted on the absolute necessity of organising the proletariat into a political party.

However, due in the main to deep factional divisions within the International, increased police persecution following the defeat of the glorious Paris Commune and the low level of the organised working class movement, the International effectively came to an end in 1872. Whatever its weaknesses its achievements were monumental. As Palme Dutt points out:

> "Directly from the First International and its initial organisation and influence arose the main political working class parties, based on the aim of socialism and guided by Marxist theory, of the subsequent period. From the First International derives the modern international working class movement and modern communism." (6)

The Second International, 1889-1914, was founded on more secure objective and subjective foundations. But the Second International also contained a mixed bag of political and trade union organisations, revolutionary, reformist and anarchist trends. The anarchists were finally excluded in 1896 but the fight against opportunism, revisionism and chauvinism in the working class movement deepened. Reformism and opportunism grew in the labour movement of the capitalist countries especially amongst the upper strata and leadership. This was the epoch of imperialism and the mass enslavement of colonised peoples. On the profits of the inhuman and super-exploitation of the colonies the metropolitan bourgeoisie were able to buy off the upper echelons of the labour movement and infect large sections of the population with the poison of chauvinism and racism. More than anybody else the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin fought vigorously for upholding the revolutionary principles of proletarian internationalism.

When war was declared in 1914 the Social Democrats in Western and Central Europe renounced their principles of internationalism, joined their governments and opened the floodgates to the slaughter of one group of workers by another. The position of the Social Democrats at that time, and in subsequent periods of history that of right wing Social Democrats, is closely bound up with the defence of capitalism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism.

The utter betrayal of Marxism by the leaders of the Second International, their opportunistic siding with the capitalists against the workers and the colonially enslaved led to the political, ideological and organisational collapse of the Second International.

The only way forward was chartered in the main by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. Lenin called for a split and for the unity of all the genuine internationalists under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

The October Revolution

An objective weakness of the first two Internationals was the absence of a single country in which the working class led by the vanguard party had triumphed. This major obstacle was removed by the Great October Revolution of 1917. The ideas, achievements and unprecedented growth of the revolution belong to mankind. Following the October Revolution the international working class now had a material base for the further elaboration and substantiation in theory and practice of proletarian internationalism free from the poison of chauvinism, opportunism and racism of the Second International. Moreover the working class movement had the advanced and mature experience of the Bolshevik Party led by Lenin to guide them. The October Revolution demonstrated that a successful socialist revolution can only be carried out and defended if it is led by a Party based on the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism in alliance with other revolutionary forces. Socialist Russia was the first anti-capitalist state in the world. It had an immeasurable immediate impact and influence on the working class movements in capitalist countries as well as on revolutionary forces in the colonies and semi-colonies. Revolutions spread to other parts of Europe, Communist parties were formed in different parts of the world and the transition from capitalism to socialism was on the agenda.

Notwithstanding the gigantic task of defending the socialist revolution and creating a new society, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party intensified their activities for a new International true to the interests of all working and oppressed people. Their impassioned appeals met with enthusiastic and warm responses and the First Congress of the Communist International – Comintern – was held in Moscow in 1919. From the outset until his death Lenin was the leader and inspirer of the Comintern on all fundamental questions relating to ideology, organisational principles, tactics and strategy. The organisational and political principles of the Comintern corresponded to the objective and subjective conditions prevailing at that time. Thus it was necessary for the Comintern in the interests of world revolution to play a distinct and direct role in the affairs of its constituent members and to impose international discipline by advancing the concept of democratic centralism in its work.

The Comintern played an important role in creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to the international and national situations guided by the one over-riding aim – that of doing its best in the finest traditions of proletarian internationalism to accelerate the revolutionary process in the capitalist world, colonies and semi-colonies.

Bourgeois and racist academics and historians unjustifiably accuse the Comintern of ignoring Africa and the problem of racism. From its inception the Comintern paid special attention to the national and colonial question and its organic link with the struggle in the capitalist countries. One of the "Conditions for Affiliation" adopted at the Second Congress in 1920 which was a binding document made it obligatory for all affiliated parties to systematically and vigorously support the struggle of the colonised peoples. (7) Both Francis Meli (8) and Brian Bunting (9) have conclusively demolished the bourgeois, racist accusations against the Comintern. Both show that the Comintern made a great contribution to the elucidation of the main characteristics of the South African revolution. Indeed, as Bunting demonstrates, the Black Republic resolution of the Comintern in 1928 was the progenitor of the Programme of the South African Communist Party adopted in 1962.

South African socialists had affiliated to the Comintern in 1920 and after the formation of the SACP in 1921 two of South Africa's working class heroes and leaders D. Ivon Jones and Bill Andrews served on the Comintern's executive. As Meli points out:

> "The assistance given by the Comintern to the liberation movements in Africa, that is, in countries where the revolutionary forces were weak, was a matter of principle and was not motivated by egoistic self-seeking considerations. The essence of this policy was the implementation of proletarian internationalism in all the organs and sections of the Comintern." (10)

It was in the years preceding the Second World War that the Comintern showed its great capacity to mobilise and to give clear general guidelines about the international situation. The Comintern gave all-round support to the development of the anti-fascist movement in Europe. However at that time sectarianism in relation to the Social Democrats and other sections of the working people had infected a majority of the Comintern. This was corrected at the Seventh Congress held in Moscow in 1935. At the time of the Congress out of fifty-seven Communist Parties in the Comintern only 22 (eleven of them in Europe) worked under conditions of legality or semi-legality. The rest were working under the most difficult conditions of illegality and for them above all the Comintern with all its services was invaluable.

The main report delivered by Dimitrov at the 1935 Comintern Congress had a stimulating and guiding influence on the working-class and national liberation movement. Dimitrov with great foresight called for the development of the broadest anti-fascist, anti-imperialist front and mercilessly exposed the dangers of sectarianism within the Communist Parties. He irrefutably set forth the cardinal principles of always having a correct balance between national and international tasks.

During that period internationalism was expressed in a variety of ways but its principle component was total solidarity with the Soviet Union which was the only really reliable bulwark against Hitler fascism. Consequently when the Hitler hordes attacked the Soviet Union, in June 1941 there arose throughout the world, including South Africa, solidarity committees in defence and in aid of the Soviet Union. This magnificent solidarity was vindicated as the Soviet Union proved to be the only country capable of delivering the decisive blow to fascism. At the very great cost of twenty million lives (of whom three million were communists), vast economic dislocation, shattered cities and devastated countryside, the victorious Red Army not only freed their Motherland but also made the major contribution in creating the necessary conditions for the creation and the defence of socialist societies in Europe. Even though faced with the gigantic problems of reconstruction, poverty, hunger and distribution the Soviet Union and the CPSU rendered to the newly created popular democracies in Europe all-round material and political support. Without this support given under the banner of proletarian internationalism contemporary history would have taken a very different course.

The Comintern had shown that it was the most powerful and influential organised international force for Socialism. But by 1943 the international and national situation in a number of countries had changed and the Comintern had outgrown its usefulness.

At this stage the Communist parties were now much stronger politically and mature theoretically. The new situation demanded that each Communist party should have the greatest possibilities for national initiative and the needs of the international communist movement no longer required leadership from a single centre based on the principles of democratic centralism and international discipline. Primarily for these reasons the Comintern was dissolved and one of the most glorious chapters in the World Communist Movement came to an end.

New Forms of Proletarianism

Following the dissolution of the Comintern an Information Bureau also known as Cominform was set up consisting of the Communist Parties of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Rumania, the

Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. After playing a limited function, the Cominform for reasons similar to that of the Comintern, was also dissolved.

Since then different forms of contact within the World Communist Movement and relations with the National Liberation Movement have developed. These take the form of regional meetings, bilateral and multi-lateral contacts and above all conferences of the International Communist and Workers' Parties. So far three such conferences have been convened – 1957, 1960 and 1969.

These conferences, working on the principle of the equality and independence of all Parties, combine dialectically the independent elaborations of the forms of struggle in individual countries with the wider and more diverse need to write all the anti-imperialist forces into one mighty stream. Jointly elaborated documents were adopted which substantiated the generalised and accumulated experiences of the World Communist Movement, and set broad tasks on the basis of the concrete national and international situation, in relation to the anti-imperialist struggle, the transition from capitalism to socialism and the future trend of the World Communist Movement.

A central theme of all the conferences was the insistent demand for world peace, for a world without nuclear weapons, for peaceful co-existence and detente.

Proletarian internationalism was the lodestar of these conferences and a vital part of it was to intensify the struggle at all levels for peace, political and military detente and the prevention of a nuclear holocaust. It is imperative for all peace-loving forces to do their utmost to prevent reactionary and racist regimes in Brazil, Israel and South Africa from becoming nuclear powers.

Is Proletarian Internationalism Obsolete?

At the present time the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist socio-political forces have widened considerably. This has led to a greater variety in the forms of struggle and its organisational expression nationally and internationally. In an effort to cope with the complex problems confronting the revolutionary forces, a few fraternal parties in Western Europe are now asserting that proletarian internationalism as we have understood it is obsolete. They claim that what is needed is a new type of internationalism which would correspond to the changes that have occurred over the past few years and the variegated and different forces that are now entering the mainstream of the struggle against monopoly capital and imperialism.

An attempt to give theoretical and practical substance to these ideas is made in an article by A. Rubbi. (11) Rubbi argues that proletarian internationalism "has become restrictive and does not accord with the social reality." Consequently "internationalism must be linked with the cardinal problems facing the world (detente, peace, rebuffing imperialism, international economic relations, hunger, poverty, etc.) with due account of the requirements of national realities. Otherwise, it would have but one fate: it would degenerate into ineffectual propaganda unrelated even to concrete manifestations of solidarity, and would be distant and alien to the working class and the broad masses of working people."

We are all agreed that for internationalism to be effective it must be linked with and reflect the real concrete problems and aspirations of humanity. For example, it is necessary to organise the most diverse sections of society in the broadest possible movement in support of those people struggling against racism, colonialism, zionism and imperialism. But this does not logically prove the case for a new type of internationalism which is supposed in some ill-defined way to supersede proletarian internationalism.

Practice is the criterion of truth and all the accumulated revolutionary experience up to the present proves the vital necessity for proletarian internationalism and its continuous creative renewal consistent with the prevailing objective and subjective conditions in individual countries and internationally.

Who can dispute the fact that the heroic victories of the Vietnamese people led by their vanguard party were made possible by the militant courageous struggle nationally and the tremendous upsurge of worldwide solidarity actions more particularly in the socialist countries? Bravery, heroism, self-sacrifice would not have been sufficient in themselves to defeat the most aggressive and predatory power – U.S. imperialism. The wherewithal to wage this struggle was supplied by the Socialist world, in particular the Soviet Union, not on the basis of some abstract notion of internationalism but specifically on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

The glorious victories scored by the people of Angola led by the MPLA, most pertinently the defeat of the racist South African troops, could not have occurred without the militant, timely fraternal assistance on the basis of proletarian internationalism of the Soviet Union, Cuba and the other socialist countries.

Internationalism to be effective cannot be confined to the undertaking and organising of solidarity actions. Of course each people contributes what they can consistent with their possibilities. But we cannot reduce internationalism to only one or two aspects however important they may be. As true internationalists we have to, if necessary, make the greatest sacrifice.

The Spanish Civil War is immortalized in the history of the communist movement. The International Brigades, in which thousands from all over the world gave their blood and lives for the defence of the Spanish revolution, remain one of the noblest contributions of proletarian internationalism.

Can we ever forget that in more recent times Cuban and Soviet citizens have lost their lives on foreign soil, not for any personal gain, financial rewards or jingoistic purposes but due to their profound understanding and belief in proletarian internationalism?

Those who argue for a new type of internationalism stress the increasingly important role played by the national liberation movements especially the revolutionary democratic states. Yet most of the leaders of the revolutionary democratic states emphasize time and again the great importance they attach to proletarian internationalism.

Agostinho Neto said in Cuba last year:

> "We are here to reiterate our loyalty to the principle of proletarian internationalism which made it possible to transform our blood ties and our common history into an invincible force in favour of freedom, independence and the happiness of the peoples . . . . What is a determining factor is the political outlook, the ideology. For example, we simply cannot imagine political unity between Cuba and Pinochet's Chile . . . When I say that the People's Republic of Angola is a state seeking increasingly close collaboration with the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist and progressive countries, it is evident that I do not consider geography the determining factor for progress, especially when we all recall the great military and political battle waged against Angola from within our continent." (12)

The Maoists having departed from the basic principles of proletarian internationalism have invariably found themselves on the same side of the barricades as the imperialists, colonialists and racists. Witness their position on Angola; their characterization of the internal conflict in Zaire, where in league with the imperialist powers they have given material and moral support to the Mobutu regime; their continued support of all kinds of renegade organisations like the Pan-African Congress (PAC). The Maoists' hostile attitude to the Soviet Union and the world socialist system is one of the main reasons explaining their betrayal of revolutionary principles.

The world socialist system in which the Soviet Union has a pre-eminent position is the principal bulwark in the fight against capitalism and imperialism. Our attitude to the socialist world must be based on a firm class approach.

The Human Rights Question

It is with this perspective that we should analyse the current hysterical campaign in the world capitalist press about the so-called lack of "human rights", "democracy" in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Unfortunately a few fraternal parties in Western Europe have also joined this orchestrated campaign of vilification.

The imperialist countries have no moral right to speak about human rights. Every major violation of the right of the toiling people in Africa, Asia and Latin America to have a decent life free from hunger, poverty, diseases and destitution is the result of colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, fascism and imperialism. It is utterly absurd that the very people who supply Vorster's bloody regime with political, economic and military support to suppress, brutalise and murder our people should show such "touching concern" for the alleged "lack of human rights" in the socialist countries. Not only communists but all progressive and democratic forces must reject with contempt this ideological offensive of the imperialist world.

A concrete class position and not a formal abstract one shows that human rights and democracy are rooted in the material base of society. It is only after putting an end to the exploitation of man by man that we can speak with certainty about developing to the full the creative personalities of the individual and the collective.

The suppression of racist, fascist, anti-human pornography is indeed a blow *for* democracy. In an independent South Africa we would never permit the dissemination of racist and fascist ideas whether in their obscurantist or more subtle forms. Thus we cannot but pour scorn on all those crocodile tears that were spilled over Solzhenitsyn and others of his ilk who by words and deeds have proved to be arch reactionaries and enemies of socialism. From this position we cannot but disagree with Mark Harrison who inexplicably alleges that the significance of Solzhenitsyn's "historical work and historical philosophy is, in part, autonomous of his political stance and will be with us for much longer". (13)

The Party and the people in the socialist countries do not claim that all their problems have been resolved. Far from it. Indeed as a study of their documents especially those relating to the Party Congresses shows, the socialist countries do not hide their deficiencies but are for ever striving to improve the style and content of their work. And who can deny that in contrast to the general crisis of capitalism the socialist countries have abolished all forms of exploitation of man by man, unemployment, hunger and poverty. Their peoples enjoy a consistent rise of material and cultural standards and increasingly better conditions for the fullest development of their personalities.

Whilst one should not have a rose-tinted picture of life in the socialist countries one should not conversely pretend to be above them and imagine that one can successfully prosecute one's struggle and create new societies without the closest co-operation with them. It is necessary to be vigilant against those who for national and other reasons give succour and support to anti-socialist elements and ideas.

In Africa the Soviet Union has in the interest of all revolutionary forces signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Somalia, Angola and Mozambique. President Machel speaks of the Soviet Union as a natural ally and expresses the desire of Mozambique to establish an "exemplary relationship" with that country. In signing the treaty Machel said:

> "Today we are mixing the blood of the Soviet people with that of the Mozambican people. The signing of this document not only satisfies the desire of our two peoples but it will also be a contribution to humanity and above all to the Socialist world". (14)

This is an exemplary class-conscious attitude based on the principles of proletarian internationalism.

Any concession to anti-Sovietism in whatever form and however disguised will in the long run always run counter to the interests of the working people. The fierce struggle against monopoly capital and imperialist aggression cannot be consummated anywhere in the world without the closest co-operation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Above all the accumulative experience and knowledge of these countries which have already built socialist societies is indispensable for all Communist and Workers' Parties who are *still* fighting for the socialist transformation of their countries.

The Danger of Opportunism

As part of the anti-Soviet offensive the bourgeois mass media constantly speculate that proletarian internationalism is merely a device for ensuring the hegemony of the CPSU and the Soviet Union. Unfortunately in their national approach to internationalism, some leaders of communist parties in some of the developed capitalist countries seem to be making similar accusations. They often express the wish to distance themselves from "Moscow". Henry Winston, chairman of the C.P. USA, in giving a fitting Marxist rebuff to these views, points out that they reveal "the logic of appeasing imperialism instead of struggling aginst its caricatures of existing socialism as 'totalitarianism' and of proletarian internationalism as a ploy for imposing 'Moscow hegemony' and monolithic domination". (15)

To absolutize the national factor, to imagine that one's situation or that of a region is so unique and special that the rich treasure house of experience of existing socialism has little or no relevance is a prescription for retreats and setbacks. Marxist-Leninist science is cast from a single piece of steel. The forms of struggle and transition to power will be different and diverse but the content is the same. There is therefore no theoretical or practical justification for "Afro-Communism", "Arab-Communism" or "Euro-Communism".

There is probably at this stage no more unique nor difficult struggle than that unfolding in racist South Africa. But if on this basis we were to argue that the general laws of social development do not apply to our country we would most certainly fail in our revolutionary duty to lead the long-suffering people of our country to freedom and a quantitatively better life.

Above all the danger of nationalism and chauvinism in the communist movement can be seen by the progressive adoption by Maoist China of positions which correspond to those of the most aggressive and reactionary sections of the monopoly bourgeoisie in the imperialist world. Those who "distance" themselves from Moscow tread a dangerous path.

Despite the differences within the international communist movement it remains the most organised and powerful force for change in the world. Detachments of the movement are found in every continent. Wherever there are communist and workers' parties they are in the forefront of organising and mobilising international solidarity actions. The jointly elaborated views of the International Communist Movement have a significance which extends far beyond their component parts. In elaborating its views the World Communist Movement does not mechanically copy one party or another, but does so on the basis that there are common universal laws governing the struggle for socialist societies. Although we operate in specific national and local conditions and never ignore or underestimate them, we are nevertheless guided by these common regularities. We should intensify the study, assimilation and correct application of the rich and variegated experience of the world communist movement.

For the International Communist Movement to fulfil its historic role most effectively, it requires unity in theory and practice at various levels. At present there are differences of an ideological and political character (some of which have been mentioned in this article) between on the one hand a few Communist Parties mainly in Western Europe and on the other the rest of the movement. It is in the interest of the communist movement to discuss and debate these problems – at various forums, bilateral and multi-lateral meetings, regional meetings and theoretical seminars and conferences such as those organised by the *World Marxist Review* – on the basis of fraternal comradeship to arrive at greater clarity, understanding and unity. Greater unity not disunity must be the common aim.

Of course every unit of the World Communist Movement is independent and its relations with others are based on equality and mutual co-operation. But this too should not be absolutised and understood in a way which weakens the communist movement.

A few fraternal parties are of the opinion that the call for the strengthening of the communist movement is a hidden menace, re-creating some form of an organised centre. This was emphatically repudiated by Leonid Brezhnev in his report to the 1976 Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe. He said:

> "The apprehensions are strange indeed. As far as it is known, nobody anywhere is proposing the idea of establishing such a centre." (16)

One of the most useful forms of communist unity is the regional meeting. Thus far regional meetings of Europe, Latin America and the Arab world have been held. The meetings of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean produced, in a part of the world where voluntarism and adventurism were rampant and where in some cases even the existence of communist parties was called into question, joint formulations on the fundamental question of strategy and tactics. The great success scored at this historic meeting and the unity evinced are a tangible contribution to the further development of the revolutionary process not only in Latin America but throughout the world. This demonstrates that, notwithstanding all the differences, what unites the communists is far greater than what divides them. Likewise the meeting of European Parties in Berlin in June 1976 was a momentous event in the struggle for detente, peace and social progress. Before the conference took place the capitalist press was widely speculating that it would not meet and if it did, it would degenerate into vitriolic attacks on the Soviet Union and would fail to produce a common jointly elaborated document.

That there were differences relating to the characterisation of the present stage, the role of the socialist countries, transition from capitalism to socialism and proletarian internationalism is well known. However overcoming the differences in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and internationalism the twenty-nine Communist and Workers' Parties found common agreement. This is of great international significance.

The bourgeoisie and its mass media always blow up out of all proportion the differences in the world communist movement. It is therefore necessary to have a greater understanding of what unites the communist movement politically and ideologically. Politically every single part of the communist movement is firmly and very deeply committed to the overturn of capitalism and its replacement by socialism. An attack upon one section of the movement, whether in Chile, Vietnam or South Africa, is an attack on the entire movement and has to be rebuffed by acting in concert. International capital can only be defeated by the unity in action of the international working class and its allies.

To pursue these noble tasks requires a deep level of ideological unity. A consistent and principled struggle must be carried out against all forms of opportunism, reformism, voluntarism and adventurism by defending the purity of Marxism-Leninism and creatively applying its general laws.

The *World Marxist Review* which is published in over thirty languages and distributed in over 100 countries has a significant role to play in that sphere. Creatively applying the science of Marxism-Leninism to the most important theoretical and practical problems of the present time the *World Marxist Review* is helping to educate, train and inform thousands of communists throughout the world.

In view of the contemporary strength and weaknesses of the international communist movement it is necessary over the next few years to work for the convening of another International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties. This conference would take into account the fundamental changes in the world balance of forces especially following the victories in Vietnam and Indo-China, the former Portuguese colonial territories, the collapse of fascism in Portugal, Greece and Spain, the increasingly important role played by revolutionary democrats especially in Africa and the heightened struggle in Southern Africa. It would also consider some of the reverses such as those in Chile and Egypt. The main aim of such a conference would be to find jointly on the basis of equality and mutual co-operation ways and means of further strengthening the great world communist movement on the basis of proletarian internationalism, so as to heighten the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, anti-racist struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

This October, communists, progressives and democrats the world over will join their Soviet comrades-in-arms in celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. During this relatively short historical period the Soviet people and the CPSU have demonstrated their fidelity to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and successfully defeated the attacks from left and right revisionists. Despite the ferocious attacks including armed intervention of the imperialist powers Soviet Russia led by the great Lenin blazed the trail into the future.

The country and the Party have gone from strength to strength and this might has not been used to gain military bases, factories, land or investment opportunities, but to improve their peoples' living and cultural standards, to create a new man and to make under the banner of proletarian internationalism the greatest single contribution to the development of the revolutionary process. The increase of Soviet power has also indisputably benefited the working class and liberation movements throughout the world.

Having completed the building of an advanced socialist society the present stage in the Soviet Union is characterised by the building of the material and technical basis of communism and the gradual development of communist social relations, the promotion of detente and world peace, and the strengthening of the bonds of true comradeship which bind the world together.

Footnotes

(1) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 20, p. 26

(2) International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969, Prague 1969, p. 39

(3) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 22, p. 347

(4) Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 148

(5) F. Meli, "Nationalism and Internationalism in South African Liberation", *African Communist* No. 57, Second Quarter, 1974, pp. 45 & 48

(6) R. Palme Dutt, *The Internationale,* London, 1964, p. 82

(7) *African Communist,* No. 59, Fourth Quarter, 1974, pp. 99-100

(8) Ibid., pp. 97-109

(9) B. Bunting, *Moses Kotane South African Revolutionary,* Inkululeko Publications, 1975.

(10) Op. Cit. p. 98

(11) A. Rubbi, "The New Internationalism", *World Marxist Review,* January 1977, pp. 84-87

(12) *Granma,* 8 August, 1976

(13) M. Harrison, "The Gulag Archipelago", *Socialist Europe*, Communist Party – Journal of Soviet and East European Studies, No. 1, p. 7
(14) *International Herald Tribune*, 1 April, 1977
(15) Henry Winston, "Spain In My Heart", *Political Affairs*, October, 1976, p. 3
(16) *Moscow News*, Supplement to Issue No. 27 (2703), 1976

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HOW THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION CAME TO S.AFRICA

by Z. NKOSI

On November 7 the progressive forces of the whole world will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. In a resolution adopted on January 31, 1977, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union declared: "The triumph of the October Revolution[1] is the major event of the 20th Century, which radically changed the course of development of all mankind". After describing the transformation brought about by the revolution in Russian society, laying the foundations for the establishment of socialism, the resolution added:

"At the same time the heroic struggle waged by the workers and peasants of Russia, to which working people around the world gave their warm and effective support, revealed, as Lenin wrote, 'to all countries something — and something highly significant — of their near and inevitable future'. It enabled all oppressed and fighting peoples to also see their own impending victory".

Few people today can properly realise the tremendous impact made by the Russian revolution at the time. It came in the middle of a bloody and protracted war in which millions of people had lost their lives and lands had been devastated for the greater glory of imperialism, for a redistribution of the markets and assets of international capitalism. In war as in peace the majority of the victims of imperialism were the working people, fodder in war for the capitalists' cannon as they were in peace for his forges, mills and mines in the overall interests of profit-taking.

For centuries men had dreamed of a social order based on peace and justice in which all would co-operate for the common good, sharing the toil and the fruits of labour in a spirit of harmony which knew no barriers of class, creed or colour. Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" written in 1515/16, William Morris' "News from Nowhere", Butler's "Erewhon" ("Nowhere" spelt backwards) – the very names of books seeking to describe the ideal society carry with them the aura of scepticism about the possibility of their achievement in real life. The world had seen the English, French and American revolutions with their magnificent declamations of liberty congeal into bourgeois class tyrannies in which the exploitation of man by man had not been abolished. The most advanced lands were dominated by capitalism, the more backward by the remnants of feudalism, tribal or clerical despotism. In the period before the first world war imperialism had thrust its greedy and bloodstained tentacles into every corner of the globe, justifying its rapacity and atrocities by deliberate resort to racism of the most blatant kind.

The Russian Revolution at a stroke tore aside the horrible curtain of lies and blood which concealed from man's sight the path forward to the socialist future. The world-wide system of class exploitation was broken for the first time as the working men and women of Russia, led by the Bolshevik Party and guided by the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and their comrades, took power and began to lay the foundations for the new socialist order.

Without doubt the Russian Revolution has been the outstanding historical event of our era, marking a decisive turning point in the struggle for the elimination of class conflict and class tyranny and exploitation, opening up for the oppressed peoples of the world the glittering prospect of liberation, the ending of imperialism and steady advance on the road to socialism, the ultimate achievement of that communist society for which men had fought and sacrificed down the ages. Though there was no radio or television in those days, the news was flashed round the world by telegraph and made an electric impact everywhere. Its reverberations are being felt with ever-increasing intensity today as the contending class forces engage in the last rounds of struggle.

Instant Recognition

Nowhere was the Russian Revolution greeted with more ready understanding and sympathy than in South Africa, where the progressive forces headed by the International Socialist League immediately recognised both its character and its long-term significance.

There were, of course, two revolutions in Russia in 1917. The first in March (February old style), succeeded in overthrowing the Czar but, although brought about largely by the struggle of the revolutionary forces, did not transfer power into the hands of the people but into those of the bourgeoisie with Kerensky as their eventual leader. The Provisional Government, in fact, took fright at the revolutionary force which had been unleashed, and which coexisted with it in the succeeding months in the form of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The bourgeoisie tried to halt the further progress of the revolution, and did nothing to solve the major issues which had brought about the revolution in the first place – the questions of land, the 8-hour working day, the problem of the oppressed nationalities. Above all, the Provisional Government did nothing to end the slaughter of the Russian soldiers on the battlefield where, ill-led, ill-fed and ill-equipped they were hapless victims of the German war machine. On the contrary, within days of the overthrow of the Czar, the Provisional Government had issued a manifesto to the army at the front and to the fleet assuring them that "the struggle against their foreign enemies will not for a moment stop". The war was to be pursued with new vigour.

It was for this reason that the March Revolution was welcomed unreservedly by Russia's wartime allies. In an editorial "The New Russia", the *Star* of March 19, 1917, proclaimed that on the whole the news was welcome. The Czar had stood for illiberal and tyrannical rule.

"The fact that this deposition was effected in a few hours and bloodlessly, is, perhaps the most remarkable proof of all of the strength of the movement which has swept like a flame through Petrograd and Moscow and the provinces – devouring the old regime, cleansing Russia of the foulness and rottenness which have hitherto been the despair of every good patriot.

"Nothing quite like this revolution has ever happened in history".

News reports stated that the old regime had been penetrated by German agents, the Empress herself was a German. "The shortage of food, the lack of organisation and the neglect of the most elementary precautions are ascribed to German influences". There was the evil influence of the court monk Rasputin, whose assassination in 1916 had triggered off the disturbances leading to the March revolution. All these were advanced as reasons for the Russian debacle on the battlefield, and the *Star* editorialised further:

"It would be quite wrong to suppose that the Russian revolution is anti-dynastic in character . . . . We may well believe that in this upheaval Russia has found herself; that a nation has been born again; and that for the future the war against the common enemy will be waged with a vigour and a determination surpassing any previous effort of our ally".

The French and British Ambassadors in Petrograd entered into business relations with the executive of the Duma. Lloyd George declared in the Commons: "It is satisfactory to know that a new Government has been formed for the express purpose of carrying on the war with increased vigour. Free peoples are the best defenders of their own honour" – remarks greeted with cheers by his supporters but amidst ironical Irish jeers and cries of "Why don't you practise what you preach?" The Commons passed unanimously a motion of "fraternal greetings" to the Duma and heartfelt congratulations to the Russian people. Pro-war Labour leaders in Britain – Henderson, Hodge, Barnes and Brace – sent a message to Russian Labour leaders stating that organised labour was watching with the deepest sympathy the efforts of the Russian people to rid themselves of the reactionary elements which are impeding the advance to victory. A Reuter report stated that the British press greeted the revolution with "unmixed joy", regarding it as "the most crushing blow yet dealt at Germany".

In its weekly journal *The International* the International Socialist League of South Africa saw the situation more clearly. The revolution was instantly recognised as having brought about a transfer of power to the bourgeoisie, and in the March 23 issue of the journal a contributor signing himself J.M.G. (Gibson) wrote deprecatingly:

"No, let us have no delusions, we don't expect a Socialist State from this Revolution, it is nothing but the rising middle class securing the reins of Government for their own ends and bribing the workers with a few sops, as it is only by their power they will be able to reach their goal. The material conditions are not sufficiently developed to form that class consciousness that must manifest itself and be the deciding factor in the struggle to bring about the Socialist Commonwealth. Undoubtedly there is a strong Revolutionary Party, but a party that must necessarily be small and not sufficiently strong to carry the mass, who will be quite content to accept the sops thrown to them".

Gibson's interpretation of the nature of the Provisional Government was correct, but his understanding of the nature of the revolutionary process which was under way in Russia was sadly at fault. However, the readers of *The International* did not have to wait until November to realise the truth. In the same issue editor Ivon Jones in a front-page editorial "170 Million Recruits" replied to Gibson:

"The Socialist International has become a far more tremendous thing by the Russian Revolution. It means that a people of 170 million has swung into line with the great proletariat of all countries on its march to the Revolution by the side of which this and all previous ones are but 'shopkeeper's riots' in immensity . . .

"The importance of this step forward in the world's history can hardly be exaggerated. The rising capitalist class cannot achieve its political revolution without the aid of the workers, nor without sharing the fruits with them. The capitalist looks only to the immediate necessities of industry, no matter if his successors have to reap the whirlwind. The proletariat must look to the end; for in its fight the means and the end, the method and the objective, are at one. The capitalist seeks a political railroad for his system. He cannot win it without providing a railroad for the working class revolution.

"We see two streams in this, as in all previous revolution. The Industrial Capitalist cry is now 'ORDER'. The proletariat driving power cries '*Liberty*'. But the workers having won their 'Programme of the Day', and the Capitalist the control of the State, the two streams immediately disunite and the class war begins on the last lap to the Socialist Revolution. Now is the dangerous hour. Now the dominant capitalist cry will be '*order*', and it will be enforced at the cannon's mouth if necessary, 'tearing the side of the proletariat', as Marx once said, if the workers are not organised independently and strong to bear the shock of the recoil . . . . .

"This is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent, it cannot be a mere repetition of previous revolutions. It partakes infinitely more of a victory for the proletariat, as well as for the industrial capitalist. Now the two classes pursue their several ways; one 'to prosecute the war abroad' and 'law and order' at home; the other to pursue the class war at home and 'the Socialist republic in all countries'. Let us look forward with great hope to the entry of the Russian elemental mass into the International class struggle for human emancipation. The day of its coming seems immeasurably nearer by this awakening."

The War on War

It is doubtful if any more perceptive or more prescient evaluation of the March revolution was published anywhere at the time. This can be attributed not only to the insight of that remarkable Marxist thinker Ivon Jones but also to the collective wisdom and experience of the body of socialists who had organised themselves into the International Socialist League. The League had been born of a split in the ranks of the Labour Party caused by the war. While the majority of the Labour Party, after opposing the war at the outset, had eventually been swept by patriotic fervour, jingoism and chauvinism into supporting the pro-war stance of the Botha-Smuts Government, the minority remained true to the Stuttgart-Basle anti-war resolution of the Second International to which the Labour Party had declared its adherence at its 1913 conference.

The anti-war resolution of the Second International, formulated largely on the initiative of Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, declared:

"If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the countries involved to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war, using all the appropriate means, which naturally vary and rise according to the degree of sharpness of the class struggle and of the general political agitation. Should war none the less break out, it is their duty to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and to strive with all their energies to utilise the economic and political crisis brought about by the war in order to stir up politically the masses of the people and hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule".

The preamble to the resolution made it clear that the reference was to wars between capitalist states, in which the working class were the cannon-fodder and the victims. The 1914-1918 war fell clearly into this category. Defeated at the August 1915 conference of the Labour Party, the true socialist elements who had already formed themselves into a War on War League which attempted to function within the Party, were forced to leave its ranks and found the International Socialist League. In its first issue on September 10, 1915, the League's organ *The International* proclaimed: "Here we plant the flag of the New International in South Africa . . . . . International working class unity . . . . is now the only way of advance for Labour. The other way presents a vista of interminable despair with bayonets and cross bones stacked on either side. By this way of the New International alone can mankind hope for a realease from the toils of the brute and rise to that higher plane where men shall scorn all conflict other than the conflict of mind with mind in the realm of the intellect."

In the same issue an article by W.H. Andrews, the Labour Party chairman who had vacated his office to help form the ISL and became its first chairman, condemned as anti-socialist the "see it through" policy advocated by Creswell, the leader of the pro-war majority of the Labour Party.

"Socialism can only succeed if it is international in its scope", he argued. "Workers of the World unite was Marx's clarion call . . . . One of the most fatal (errors) is that socialism can be established in water tight compartments . . . . . the true path to human emancipation (is) the International Unity of the Working Class."

The objects of the ISL were inter alia "to propagate the principles of International Socialism and anti-militarism and to promote International Socialist unity and activity"; one of the methods advocated was "to maintain and strengthen International working class organisation".

From the very outset the ISL called for the formation of a new international. In the second issue of *The International* appeared an open letter from Ivon Jones as secretary addressed to the British section of the International Socialist Bureau and calling for the establishment of a World Party.

"What we have looked for so far in vain", he said, "is news of any attempt to link up these anti-militarist minorities of the world into one New International Organisation to replace the old one which must be admitted to have failed." He singled out the Italian Socialist Party and the Russian Social Democratic Party as the only ones which had remained true to their principles and suggested that they, together with the afore-mentioned minorities in other countries, formed the obvious foundations for the suggested new international structure. When, later in the year, the Zimmerwald conference decided to form an International Socialist Bureau, the ISL greeted the news with enthusiasm and *The International* commented in an editorial on December 17: "Now they (our members) can surely feel that we form at least a lowly outpost of the fast mobilising world army of Militant Socialism, members of a real Executive Internationale".

At the first conference of the International Socialist League held in Johannesburg in January 1916 the Zimmerwald manifesto was endorsed and the League's affiliation with the International Socialist Commission at Berne was carried unanimously. The Commission was urged to form a permanent commission to prepare for "a probable uprising of the proletariat at the conclusion of the war". The ISL was to stress continuously that only international socialism could free the world from the horrors of capitalism and war.

Internationalism at Home

The founders of the ISL were whites, former members of the Labour Party and trade unionists who had borne the brunt of the many fierce and bloody struggles of the white working class against the employers and the state during the previous decades in pursuit of their right to recognition of their unions, the right to collective bargaining and improvement of their wages and working conditions. They had joined the Labour Party because they realised that only through political action could the working class achieve its objectives. They left Labour and formed the ISL out of a commitment to anti-militarism, socialism and the international solidarity of the working class. Most of them were English-speaking, which meant that in the South African context they were in danger of becoming isolated from the mass of the working class, both white and black, as Afrikaners and Africans were sucked in increasing numbers into the industrial machine. Not all of them were Marxists, and not all of them proved able to extend their international outlook to include members of different national groups in South Africa itself, though from the outset the ISL had no colour bar.

The most forward-looking elements quickly realised that any true internationalism must not only aim at unity with Russian, Italian and German social-democrats but must also embrace unity of all sections of the working class in South Africa, black and white.

"An internationalism which does not concede the fullest rights which the Native working class is capable of claiming will be a sham", wrote Ivon Jones in *The International* of October 1, 1915. "One of the justifications for our withdrawal from the Labour Party is that it gives us untrammelled freedom to deal, regardless of political fortunes, with the great and fascinating problem of the native. If the League deal resolutely and in consonance with Socialist principles with the native question, it will succeed in shaking South African capitalism to its foundations. Then and not till then, shall we be able to talk about the South African Proletariat in our International relations. Not till we free the native can we hope to free the white."

A resolution moved by Bunting calling for "the abolition of all forms of Native indenture" and "the lifting of the Native worker to the political and industrial status of the white" was passed at the ISL's first conference in January 1916. That same week *The International* stressed that the race question was the most burning issue confronting the movement and went to the root of socialist theory.

"Here we have a fight before us of a magnitude unexampled in any other section of the Socialist International. But a fight fraught with wonderful possibilities for the native and for the movement which he must inevitably dominate".

Though Marxist writings on the national question had not yet reached South Africa, there were even the first glimmerings of the realisation, later to dominate Communist thinking, that South Africa was confronted by a national as well as a class problem.

An editorial in *The International* of December 15, 1916, stated: "We do not believe in native, any more than we do in British or German, agitations *as such*. But we are not foolish enough to suppose that the economic emancipation of the worker can avoid taking special native forms in the case of the native workers, more especially as they are placed under special native forms of slavery today".

The pioneering nature of ISL thinking and action at this time can be appreciated only when one bears in mind that the national liberation movement itself was in its infancy. The African National Congress, formed only a few years previously in 1912, was largely under bourgeois influence and on the outbreak of war decided "to hang up Native grievances" and to support the Botha Government's war effort. Dube and other leaders hurried off to Pretoria to offer the services of Congress, only to receive the reply that this was a white man's war and the services of Africans in a combatant capacity were not wanted. As for the African working class, despite a history of militant strike actions stretching back to the beginnings of industrialisation in the 1880s, there was at the time of the first world war no organised African trade union movement. As far as the ISL could see, no vehicle existed either in the national or the class sphere which was capable of mobilising the African people for mass action against the colour bar, and for peace and socialism. Though at this stage lacking in theoretical understanding of the relationship between national and class struggle (a theory which was still to be elaborated in its modern form over the next two decades by the international as well as the South African working class movement), the ISL straight away began to accept the implications of its internationalism in the national context. Contacts began to be made with African leaders, there were appearances on joint platforms, the ISL and later the Communist Party promoted the organisation of the first African trade unions. Contact was also made with Coloured and Indian national organisations and trade unions and wherever possible joint activities were undertaken. Nor was this "reaching out" process restricted to blacks. Articles in Dutch were printed in *The International* and literature produced in Dutch for distribution amongst the Afrikaner workers.

Afrikaner Nationalism

For historical and national reasons, Afrikaner nationalists and international socialists shared common attitudes on a number of issues, though their ideologies were quite different. They were both against the war. This led to Afrikaner nationalist identification with the Germans as the enemy of the English, something quite different from ISL opposition to militarism and war springing from equation of Allied and German imperialism alike as the enemies of the working class. But in addition there was a strong anti-capitalist strain in Afrikaner nationalism at this time, and indeed for many decades thereafter, deriving from the class background of the Afrikaner people, either on the land, or newly driven therefrom to join the ranks of the urban proletariat. It was the Englishman and the Jew who dominated in the mining houses, in business and on the stock exchange, and it was British imperialism which had destroyed the national independence of the Afrikaners embodied in the Boer republics.

These were some of the reasons leading Afrikaner nationalists to share in the general welcome for the Russian revolution, not only in March 1917 because it weakened the Allied front against the Germans, but also after November because it threatened international capitalism from which the Afrikaner was still largely excluded. There were other historical links between the Afrikaners and the Russians. The Czar had sent aid to the Boers during the 1899-1902 war. When the Russo-Japanese war broke out ex-President Kruger, then in exile in Switzerland, sent a donation of 500 roubles for the Russian wounded. After the Russian Revolution, many Afrikaner leaders openly expressed their interest in the Revolution and some even their sympathy with the Bolsheviks. In April 1917 the Nationalist paper *The Interpreter* advised South African Nationalists to "keep friendly eyes open to events in Russia", and in November Tielman Roos voiced the hope that the Germans and the Bolsheviks would, once the war was over, look with sympathy on the stand Afrikaner nationalists had taken. In 1919 General Hertzog "warmly commended Bolshevism to the public" and told a Nationalist Party congress that "Bolshevism is the will of the people to be free". His lieutenant Dr Malan, later to be Prime Minister after the 1948 elections, told a public meeting in Vryburg in 1920: "The aim of the Bolshevists was that Russians should manage their own affairs without interference from outside. This was the same policy that Nationalists would follow in South Africa. The Bolshevists stand for freedom, just like the Nationalist Party".

Nationalist Party ideas of freedom, of course, did not extend to blacks, and their philosophy was light-years away from that of the International Socialists. Nevertheless, their activities and propaganda at this time had some anti-imperialist content, and had the effect of leading some of the finest spirits among the Afrikaners towards the ISL and later the Communist Party. It also helped to create an atmosphere in which all progressives would look with sympathy on the Russian revolutionaries. Bill Andrews noted in his diary at the time that in celebration of the March revolution at "Springs mine bottom shaft a kaffir blanket (red) flys from the shaft head", indicating support for the revolution at grass roots level. And an outstanding spirit like Olive Schreiner, according to the autobiography of her husband Cronwright, "looked upon Lenin as incomparably the greatest – if not the only great – man the European situation had produced and as a statesman of outstanding genius".

Yet nowhere was the true significance of the Russian revolution appreciated so keenly and with such enthusiasm as in the ISL, and especially in the columns of *The International.* As has already been indicated, the March events had been correctly interpreted by Ivon Jones and his colleagues, and as news of the intense struggle for power between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the ensuing months reached South Africa, *The International* continued to provide an uncannily accurate assessment of the contending forces. On May 11, 1917, the paper commented:

"The Russian workmen are simply wonderful. The joyful part of it is that there is going to be so many of them. To lead the world back from savagery to humanity seems to be their great mission. They are leaving capitalist government severely alone. The working class of Germany, France and England alone concerns them. And from their dominating position in the great Russian Revolution – and every new report enhances its greatness – they are going out to reclaim the lost sheep of the Socialist International, bringing international working class action to bear for the confounding of the capitalist conspiracy to murder off the best sons of Europe. Hail to the coming Revolution, now within living sight".

Whereas the first call of the Russian Soviet to the German Socialists to end the war had turned the Revolution sour in the eyes of the international bourgeoisie (the *Star* called it "a silly Utopian thing to do", and warned against the Left trend which it described as Jacobin). *The International* replied that this was "exactly what the ISL would have done . . . . . They (the Russian workers) have proved that international united action of the workers is the only practical solution".

The ISL correctly evaluated the situation arising from the dual government of the Duma and the Soviet, the former an "engine of capitalism" resorting more and more to dictatorial methods in its attempts to hold back the popular forces, the other operating independently in its historical task of mobilising the masses to complete the socialist revolution. Marx had said that "new and higher social institutions are never established until the material conditions of life to support them have been prepared in the lap of the old society itself". *The International* regarded the Soviet as proof that these conditions were maturing in Russia. "Here we see 'in the lap of the old society' the Socialist Commonwealth forming, the workers directing society as workers and not as voters . . . . The Council of Workmen . . . . has given the nudge to the whole working class movement of Europe as to the lines on which the Social Revolution can be made imminent". (May 18, 1917.)

The Return of Lenin

Lenin's return to Russia in April spurred on the revolutionary forces. The bourgeoisie in Russia and abroad were getting more and more alarmed, and there were even those – as there were at the time of the Finnish war in 1940 – who were prepared to switch the war against the Reds. Worried by the de facto armistice which had been in effect on the Russian front since May, *The Star* on May 17 suggested: "Perhaps the most effective cure would be the most drastic – a German attack on the Russian soldiers who, reacting to the peace movment, have been so ready to 'fraternise' with the enemy". *The International* replied: "Now *The Star* is showing the capitalist death's head. The Hun, the destroyer of human freedom, is now preferable to a Russia controlled by working men. Workers, take note, when you take control, the Capitalists will forget their quarrels to shoot you down". (May 18, 1917.) *The Star*'s thinking was shared by Smuts who at the end of the war argued for lenient treatment of Germany – "her appeasement now may have the effect of turning her into a bulwark against the on-coming Bolshevism of eastern Europe". (Hancock: *Smuts, The Sanguine Years* pp. 510-512.)

The ISL did not confine their analysis to the columns of *The International*. Nominated as ISL candidates in the Provincial Council elections scheduled for June 20, Andrews and Bunting in their manifesto called on the electorate to vote socialist. "Fellow workers of South Africa, it is high time for you all to rise to the occasion, following the bold and inspiring lead of the Russian Workers". In *The International* of June 8 Bunting contributed an article "The Star in the East" in which he said:

"Today we have the glorious opportunity by voting Socialist on June 20th of associating ourselves unmistakably with the magnificent lead of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Committees . . .

" 'Workers of the World' cry the Russian revolutionaries to all nations, 'for very shame arise! Unite! Assert yourselves! Shake off the besotting fumes of your mad patriotic carouse. Be free men! Help us! Carry on forthwith throughout the earth what we have begun here! Already we are gripping the ruling class by the throat. The hour has arrived for us, all together, to fling away our chains! Thus alone shall we 'stop the war', rid the world of all its Kaisers and secure the only victory worth having. For all your dearly bought war 'gains' and the enemy's alike must inevitably, as by a stroke of the pen, become neutralised and of no avail once man's Empire over man is swept away, and real liberty, transcending parties, frontiers, races and nationalities, is won at last' ".

Bunting and Andrews, both of whom had been elected to the Provincial Council when members of the Labour Party, lost the election because, in the words of *The International* after a previous election defeat, the "great mass of the proletariat . . . happens in South Africa to be BLACK, and therefore disfranchised and totally outcast".

The appeal of the Russian Soviet for international working class action to stop the war and spread the cause of socialism began to take practical shape, and it was proposed that an international socialist conference should be held in Stockholm in September 1917. The ISL supported the proposed conference from the outset, and an article on the conference in *The International* of June 8, 1917, revealed that the South African internationalists had grasped the essence of internationalism.

"The ISL has been carrying on alone in South Africa the same fight that the Russian Socialists have waged – the international class war." Warning against the hypocrisy of some of those claiming to be socialists who had advanced a claim to attend the Stockholm conference, the article stressed that no one who practised or accepted a colour bar had any right to be called a socialist, least of all Creswell, whose name was being bandied about by the Labourites.

"What does sympathy with the Russian Revolution imply, comrades?" asked *The International* indignantly, and explained: "It implies the solidarity of labour irrespective of race or colour. That phrase may be hackneyed so let us be precise. The Russian Revolution in South Africa means the welcome hand to the native workingman into the fullest social and economic equality he is capable of attaining with the white workingman. This is the bedrock on which we split in South Africa". Nobody who acknowledged the colour bar had any right to represent South African workers at Stockholm. In the event a conference was held in Johannesburg on August 5 with delegates drawn from all parts of the country and a motion was passed reading:

"That a delegate be sent to the International Socialist Congress to be held at Stockholm or elsewhere to co-operate with the Socialist comrades of all countries, belligerent or neutral, with a view to establishing a new International, and that the delegates be instructed to advocate and vote for a peace on the lines of a complete destruction of the Capitalist system and the introduction of the Socialist Commonwealth". Andrews was elected unanimously as delegate. He got no further than London, for the Allied authorities took steps to prevent the delegates from getting through to Stockholm, but his mission was not entirely wasted. He made contact with all sections of the British working class movement, in particular with those elements moving in the same direction as the ISL. He also made contact with Maxim Litvinoff, the Bolshevik representative in London, and in many long conversations with him both apprised him of the realities of the situation in South Africa, and learnt in return of the implications, national and international, of the Russian revolution. On his return home in June 1918, Andrews produced a pamphlet *The Workers' Revolution in Russia* which was printed in English, Afrikaans and Yiddish, giving the first comprehensive account of the Revolution, together with the first constitution of the new workers' state. It is perhaps symptomatic of the distance the movement still had to travel in South Africa that this pamphlet was not translated into any of the African languages.

Bolshevik Victory

Meanwhile, news of developments in Russia appeared regularly in *The International*, which throughout 1917 consistently supported what it described as Lenin's class war slogan that the aim of socialists should be to turn the national war into an international class war. The Bolsheviks, who had been in a minority in the Soviet in March, gained ground steadily as the Provisional Government and the Mensheviks failed to come forward with solutions for the pressing problems facing the people, peace, land and bread. The history of the months between March and November is full of lessons for revolutionaries everywhere, a fascinating story of the development of working-class consciousness and power in the face of the attempts by Kerensky and the bourgeoisie to suppress the Bolsheviks and halt the progress of the revolution. By refusing to be provoked into premature revolt, by constant and painstaking agitation and organisation among the workers and soldiers, the Bolsheviks eventually won the support of the majority for their policies. It was thanks not only to objective factors but also to the inspired work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks that the progression from the bourgeois to the proletarian stage of the revolution took only 8½ months.

Equally remarkable for South Africans is the fact that the ISL's thinking kept pace with that of Lenin and his comrades during this period. It is easy enough to be wise after the event, to see links and make connections, knowing in advance what the outcome is to be. But to make a correct analysis in the confusion of the war atmosphere from a distance of 8,000 miles is testimony of the depth of Marxist understanding among the members of the ISL. On the eve of the Bolshevik revolution an article in *The International* of November 2 sensed that the crisis was nearing its climax.

"The Russian Revolution, like all previous revolutions, is incapable of coming to a resting place", the paper stated. "It must either go forward to its proletarian end of a Social revolution or back to reactionary capitalism. It cannot poise at the moderate, enlightened bourgeois, pacifist, liberal-labour stage . . . . the fight is becoming clearer cut between Lenin, out for the Social Revolution, and Milvukov (sic), out for capitalist reaction". (Miliukov was the leader of the Constitutional Democrats, known as the Cadets, the party of right-wing reaction.)

On November 7 the guns of the *Aurora* battleship signalling the opening of the attack on the Winter Palace in Petrograd and the consummation of the socialist revolution reverberated not only in the Russian capital but through all the world. In Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and other centres where socialist groups had been functioning, the news was greeted with enthusiasm. *The International* of December 7 said:

"The developments in Russia baffle comment. Exultation admits of no commentary. What we are witnessing is an unfolding of the world-wide Commonwealth of Labour which, if the oppressed of all lands only knew, and knowing, were only free from the miasmas of the system and of hopes deferred, would sweep them into transports of gladness. It is this high ecstasy which animates the Russian people today . . .

"Our task in South Africa is a great one. We must educate the people in the principles of the Russian Revolution as we have never done before, by tens of thousands of leaflets. No comrade can stand today with arms akimbo, no branch should languish. It were a desertion of the cause. We have to prepare the workers against any attempt to mobilise them against their Russian comrades, and in so preparing spread the flames of the most glorious and most peaceful revolution of all time".

The bourgeoisie, naturally, was less enthusiastic, in fact downright hostile, and the bourgeois press descended to the gutter in its search for epithets to smear the Bolsheviks. Reporting the revolution in its issue of November 9, *The Star* described Lenin as "the notorious German agent" and the following day alleged that his activities had been directed from Berlin via Stockholm. After reporting Lenin's call for an end to the war, the paper added hopefully that "a faked peace with Lenin and his gang of thieves, cut-throats and spies, is not likely, however, to be an enduring pact". It doubted whether outside Petrograd and Moscow Lenin had much support. In its issue of November 12 a headline proclaimed: "Lenin Regime Doomed . . . . Kerenski's Army Approaching" and its news report from London included a proclamation by Comissary (sic) Stankevich to the effect that: "The termination of the Bolshevik adventure is only a matter of days or hours". On November 14 the paper carried a report in which the Bolsheviks were described as "a herd of lunatics headed by a gang of scoundrels".

The Bolshevik regime survived the insults, the counter-revolution, the civil war, the famines and perils of the ensuing years, the rise of fascism and the horrors of the second world war, the threats of atomic devastation at the height of the cold war, the vicious provocations, intrigues and betrayals of the present day – the bastion of social revolution in the modern world as it was in 1917, enemy of imperialism, friend and ally of the forces of national liberation and progress everywhere.

And just as the Bolsheviks remained true to their mission, so too did the South African International Socialists. Their third annual conference in January was attended by a record number of delegates from many centres in an atmosphere described by *The International* as "jubilant and happy". Comrade Wade moved a resolution: "That this Third Annual Conference of the I.S.L. rejoices beyond measure at the triumph of the Russian Revolutionary proletariat under the banner of the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party, and pledges on behalf of the advanced proletariat of South Africa its growing support to stand by the Russian workmen against the Capitalist Governments of the whole world, that of South Africa included". It was further resolved to send greetings to the representative of the Russian Revolution in London, and Andrews was asked to get in touch with Litvinoff. The incoming Management Committee was instructed to concentrate on the organisation of the workers and to keep the principles of the Russian Revolution before the workers, by leaflet distribution and public meetings. The conference dispersed to cheers for the Russian Revolution and the singing of the Red Flag.

The Russian Revolution had made its indelible mark on the political situation in South Africa. It led to a great political upsurge in the post-war period, and provided the national and working class movements with immense new perspectives. The ISL was not the only socialist organisation in South Africa. Smaller groups existed in the other main centres of South Africa; one, the Industrial Socialist League of Cape

Town, called its monthly journal *The Bolshevik* under the impact of 1917.

After Lenin had launched the new world working-class organisation The Third International, the International Socialist League was among the first to affiliate, and called on all Marxist groups in South Africa to unite and establish a single revolutionary party. After a number of preliminary discussions, The Communist Party of South Africa was formed on July 31, 1921, a declaration of aims and a constitution were adopted and application was made for affiliation to the Third International. The revolutionary process in South Africa was now well under way.

In the ensuing years, the South African Communists have strengthened their links with the international Communist movement, of which its Party has been one of the most active and consistent components. Above all, the fraternal relationship between the South African Communist Party and the CPSU and the Soviet Union has developed and deepened over the years on the basis of the abiding principles of proletarian internationalism. Lenin said: "No force on earth is capable of taking from us the principal gains of our revolution, for they are no longer 'ours' but have become the gains of world history".

In the words of the late J.B. Marks, national chairman of the South African Communist Party, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Russian revolution: "In a very real and concrete sense, we of Africa, and all the world's fighters for national liberation, understand that those gains are ours as well, and we are standing up to claim them".

Note

1. Although the Russian Revolution occurred on November 7, 1917, and its anniversaries are celebrated on that date, it is often referred to as the October Revolution because Tsarist Russia was at that time using a different calendar from the rest of the world, the Julian Calendar, which was 11 days behind. Thus November 7 was October 25 in the old Russian calendar. Most other countries had long since abandoned the Julian calendar – Italy in 1582 and England in 1752.

SOVIETSKY NAROD*

by A.N.C. KUMALO

(dedicated to the Soviet People on the 60th Anniversary of the
Great October Revolution)

Sovietsky narod
in our planet that keeps spinning
you can perceive your past
in the sounds of our present.

Sovietsky narod
you can recognise the Czar Nicholas
in his palace of Pretoria.

Sovietsky narod
the massacre of St. Petersburg
is echoed in Sharpeville and Soweto.

Sovietsky narod
the sounds of our awakening
are like the thunder of Aurora's cannons.

Sovietsky narod
Lenin's spirit lives in our distant land –
our names are Dadoo, Fischer, Kotane, Marks.

Sovietsky narod
Gorky's spirit lives in our distant land –
our names are La Guma, Hutchinson, Kgotsitsile, Serote.

Sovietsky narod
you have heard that Vorster is Hitler's disciple –
we too will have our Stalingrads!

Sovietsky narod
we know your sacrifice
we know your solidarity
you tighten your belts for us
as though we were your *own* partisans.

*Soviet Nation

Sovietsky narod –
from the Baltic sea to the Black sea;
from the Caspian to the Pacific shore –
we know you see in our struggle
the images of your own past.

Sovietsky narod
you will be welcome
as friends, comrades, brothers
on the sacred soil of our liberated land
when we too have vanquished the vultures.

Moscow 28/3/77

MOBUTU & HIS IMPERIALIST ALLIES

by A. LANGA

The popular uprising against the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko earlier this year marked the beginning of a new phase in the assault on imperialism in Africa. The initial wave of mass insurrection, centred on Shaba province, left Mobutu and his murderous regime battered, militarily discredited, and starkly revealed as totally, humiliatingly dependent for survival on the international gendarmerie of imperialism. For Mobutu it was a signal of the beginning of the end.

The political lessons to be drawn from the Zaire events are of prime importance to all African revolutionaries. The most important, the overwhelming one, is that, after a long period of difficulty, *revolutionary struggle is surging ahead* in our continent, and, moreover, struggle of an ideologically and politically much more advanced stage than the anti-colonial revolts of 20 years ago. The agenda is now not that of petty-bourgeois nationalism and neo-colonial accommodation, but of the complete liquidation of imperialist domination and of laying the foundations of socialism. The roll-call of progressive countries, firmly buttressed, materially and politically, by the Soviet Union and its revolutionary allies, grows longer, and the political preparedness of

African peoples, after a decade and more of neo-colonialist exploitation, is exemplified in the fantastic reception accorded the anti-Mobutu forces in the towns and countryside of Zaire.

These great successes by the Zairois liberators were achieved in circumstances of incredible difficulty. Mobutu came to power stained with the blood of Patrice Lumumba: his regime had, since then, slaughtered thousands of Zaire patriots, in battle, in torture chambers, in mass executions, and plunged this enormous, potentially wealthy country into penury, misery, and complete subservience to foreign exploiters. Millions were squandered on Mercedes, on airfreighted Parisian and South African food, on absurd prestige projects – all of these paid for with massive, obvious, paralysing, governmental corruption – while the country was turned from an agricultural exporting economy into one which had to import 14% of its staple foods by 1973, contributing (with those cars and other luxuries) to a colossal $1,000m. import bill the following year.

What Mobutu's regime offered the Zaire people for the past decade (aside from declining living standards, closed schools, impassable roads, unsafe drinking water and – if they step out of line – beatings and killings by the regime's thugs) was a vacuous proto-fascist ideology of "authenticity" and "Mobutuisme", and the occasional profligate spectacle, such as the world title boxing match between Ali and Foreman.

This grotesque regime began to crumble in panic virtually as soon as the uprising began in Shaba. It is clear that its functionaries immediately deserted their posts in droves, while the enormous, poorly trained, ill-motivated (and largely unpaid) army simply refused to fight or even to go near the centres of armed struggle, while the generals and their flunkeys issued lunatic reports of "victories" and "2,000 armed Cubans" and so forth from hundreds of miles away! Even the "elite" regiment, the so-called Kamanayola Division, which was (apparently) prepared at least to move in the general direction of the revolutionaries, was reported to have been unable to get very far because of the prior theft (no doubt by its officers) of petrol and equipment. The popular forces, led not by Cubans or "former Katangese gendarmes" but by the liberation fighters grouped around FODELICO and FNLC, had taken control of major areas and towns in Shaba, directly threatening Mobutuist and imperialist control of much of the copper industry, and encouraging the already developing (in some cases long ongoing) revolutionary insurrections in other areas of this vast country.

This collapse of the neo-colonial state obviously presented imperialism with a severe crisis – and one from which, again, there are important lessons for us to draw. Zaire had become over recent years a centre for all manner of imperialist schemes – not only for the exploitation of the vast mineral and other resources of Zaire itself, but for the concerted attack on Angola, for conspiracies against the progressive government of the Congo, and generally for safeguarding imperialism's hegemony in the west-central African region.

But here what becomes significant is the different interests which the various imperialist powers have in the region – and the rivalries which play themselves out on African soil. To put it simply, it appears that the French and Belgian imperialists in particular regarded it as essential that Mobutu's regime be preserved at all costs, while the United States played a relatively quiescent role as far as overt military action was concerned. What lies behind these apparent differences?

Firstly, the French and Belgian capitalists, and particularly the finance-capital sector, had a substantial stake – perhaps some $400m – in bank debts which Zaire was unable to pay back, in addition to direct investments in the Zaire economy (especially that of Union Miniere and the Societe General), and a huge economic political investment in the equipping and training of the Zaire armed forces – Zaire has been one of the most important customers of the French armaments industry in recent years. In addition, France was extremely anxious to stabilize the tottering edifice of its West African francophone "empire", far less secure of late.

Small wonder, then, that Rene Journiac, President Giscard's chief hatchet man on African affairs, was hurriedly sent to Kinshasa, and the imperialist military machine went into action. French air transport materialized, French officers and "advisers" were mobilised, and 1,500 imperialist lackeys, in the shape of the Moroccan soldiers of King Hassan, were loaded up to go and do service against their own continent. This direct act of aggression had its effect – the liberation forces were checked, and Mobutu's army stiffened to some extent by the presence of the Moroccan and French invaders. It is crystal clear, however, that without this backing Mobutu would have collapsed immediately and that – even more importantly – the imperialists and their African quislings would be drawn more and more deeply into direct military underpinning of his regime. It was equally clear that the popular struggles against it would grow more and more irresistible.

Imperialism was thus drawn once more into its historic trap. It *must* support its lackeys and allies, or lose its lifeblood: it thus became involved more and more deeply in a struggle which, in the long run, it could not win, and which moreover ensured that its defeat would be the more thorough, humiliating, debilitating and complete. Unless a "viable alternative" to Mobutu could be found, in other words, French imperialism was headed for a major crisis, and Hassan's regime for certain oblivion.

It was the possibility of a "viable alternative" which seemed to be a feature of the US's relatively "low profile" in this imperialist conspiracy – although clearly the CIA and the American military were closely in touch with both Mobutu and his aggressor allies. An important element of opinion in US ruling circles appeared to hold the view that the Mobutu regime, for long the centrepiece of American policy in the region, was not worth saving, and that an alternative must be found. A powerful factor in this argument was the sentiment of the major US banks – particularly Morgan Guaranty Trust and Citibank, and the US Government's own Export-Import Bank – which have been the major potential losers from Zaire's vast defaulting on foreign debts. Nobody quite knows how much money Mobutu and his henchmen borrowed, on often usurious terms, from international agencies, imperialist banks, arms manufacturers, foreign governments, equipment salesmen, etc. etc. But the figure is certainly in the region of $2,000m. – none of which Zaire was able even to start repaying, and which led first to anxious conferences by its imperialist creditors, and then to embittered wrangling as Eximbank, and others, jockeyed to get preferential treatment for payment of their particular debts.

The anxieties of Mobutu's backers about the fate of their millions was aggravated by the fact that their robbery of Zaire's resources has left the economy virtually devoid of the capacity to stage a balanced recovery. Aside from the banks, the US government alone had poured in $800m. since 1970 in "aid", to facilitate what the US State Department's spokesman called "our access on favourable terms to Zaire's mineral resources"; the IMF, too, pumped in $169m. last year – but demanded a staggering 42% currency devaluation as the price, further adding to the misery of the Zairois masses, dependent as they are on the import of staple foods and other essentials (a trade of which South Africa, incidentally, was a major beneficiary). Despite all this, however, the copper price had not risen all that much from the low level of the last few years; there were thus "problems" with the completion of the giant Tenku-Fungurume copper mine (largely owned by South African and other imperialist capital), with the Inga Shaba hydro-electric project, and, as we have seen, with the country's agriculture and food production.

Meanwhile Mobutu himself presided over corruption on a massive and open scale, a fair portion of it being diverted to add to the CIA funds in the pocket of his brother-in-law, Holden Roberto, to assist in his conspiracies against Angola. With all these signs of the ineffectiveness of Mobutu in maintaining "favourable access", unless with massive Western intervention on his side, it was not at all surprising that the Americans were looking for a new candidate as their stooge in Zaire.

There were, in other words, important differences between the different imperialist countries about how to deal with the Zaire "problem", and other African countries. France and Britain are faced with continuing rapid decline of their advantages in African countries: it is this decline which led the French to intervene so directly under the threadbare veneer of Moroccan participation in the actual fighting. The new US Administration of President Carter, on the other hand, has brought back to the centre of US policy, it appears, the circles which quite early on decided that US imperialist interests were not best served by direct military intervention of the "global policeman" kind. Vance, the foreign affairs chief, for example, was an early dissident over military escalation in Vietnam. America's new strategy, however, is no less aggressive in intent or in effect: it involves relying on neo-colonial "friends", on the local ruling classes in imperialist-dominated countries, on maximizing internal political divisions and the emergence of reliably pro-US groups, assisted by an "activist" US diplomatic effort (e.g. Zimbabwe!), by American economic influence, and, despite all the pious protestations, by an accelerated campaign at undercover penetration and intrigue by the CIA and other covert arms of imperialist policy. For the Zaire people to consolidate and extend the great successes they have achieved in their struggle against imperialism and its lackeys, therefore, they will also have to deal with a number of subtly different counter-revolutionary strategies by the imperialists, as well as with the savagery of the local bourgeoisie and their imperialist, Moroccan and mercenary cohorts. Nor should the counter-revolutionary activities of the Chinese be overlooked. Zaire is another badge of shame on their tattered banner.

There can be no question, however, that whatever temporary reverses may be experienced, the Zaire revolutionaries have advanced the African revolution by a giant step, and in the process contributed materially to the weakening of imperialism, the consolidation of People's Angola, and progress towards the liberation of southern Africa as well.

DEATH OF M.P. NAICKER

It is with deep regret that we record the death of comrade M.P. Naicker while on his way from London to Berlin on April 29. The following tribute to his memory was delivered at his funeral in London on May 8 by Dr Y.M. Dadoo, national chairman of the South African Communist Party:

We are gathered here to bid our last farewell to our dear Comrade MP – a great freedom-fighter, a dedicated revolutionary, a staunch internationalist – a truly outstanding leader and organiser of the people of our country South Africa.

The loss of MP will be sorely felt throughout the movement. There is no campaign in the South African struggle since the 1940's which does not bear the imprint of his valuable contribution.

Born into an Indian working class family in the harsh economic conditions of the 20's, he was forced to leave school at an early age with a limited formal education. He worked in a factory, he drove a baker's van, he quickly learned the nature of national and class oppression. He joined the Communist Party at the age of 18, and from then on, his entire life – for the next 40 years – was to be spent in the service of the people, without regard to personal sacrifice or cost.

MP was responsible, together with his comrades, particularly George Ponen and the late H.A. Naidoo, for organising the Indian workers into trade unions and leading them into militant strikes. At the same time he worked assiduously to bring about co-operation and unity among all the black workers. He was elected Secretary of the Natal Sugar Workers' Union and energetically plunged into the difficult task of contacting the workers in the sugar-fields.

MP was a key figure in the Anti-Segregation Council of the Natal Indian Congress which helped to transform the Congress into a mass organisation with a militant policy of struggle and of unity in action of all the black people.

In the 1946 Indian Passive Resistance campaign, MP distinguished himself as an able and first class organiser and was appointed Secretary of the Passive Resistance Council – and subsequently became Secretary of the Natal Indian Congress.

MP's immense contributions and leading role in all the major campaigns and trials, such as the National Day of Protest 1950, the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Congress of the People 1955, the Treason Trial 1956, the May 1961 Strike, are too numerous to enumerate here in the short time at our disposal.

During his long political career he was arrested countless times and during the 60's he was detained under the 90- and 180- day Acts.

In exile since 1966 he threw himself unflinchingly into the work of the External Mission of the African National Congress. As Director of Publicity and Editor of *Sechaba* he fulfilled his duties with distinction and served the cause nobly to the end.

We remember, and history will record, his total commitment to the struggle for national liberation and socialism in South Africa. As a son of the working class he remained loyal throughout his life, to his class and its Party, the Communist Party, an uncompromising enemy of apartheid, capitalist exploitation and oppression – a South African patriot and revolutionary whose life's work was to consolidate the unity of the black people and all revolutionaries in the freedom struggle. By his overpowering energy, clarity of thought and magnetic personality, he endeared himself to the people as a leader, guide and friend.

As an internationalist, friend of the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries, he well understood that the unity of the socialist world, the working class of the capitalist countries and the liberation movements of Africa, Asia and Latin America was the decisive revolutionary force of our times against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism and for peace, national independence and socialism.

Allow me on behalf of all of us, to extend to Ayah, Saro and the family our deepest condolences in their and our great loss. We assure you that you are not alone and never will be – the South African people and the progressive peoples of the world are with you. We know that you will bear the loss with courage, confident in the knowledge that MP lives with us in the struggle at this crucial hour when the courageous youth and working people of our country under the leadership of the liberation forces headed by the African National Congress are storming the citadel of racist fascist tyranny.

Hamba Kahle MP – the struggle continues. We mourn not, we mobilise – we fight. Your life work continues – Victory is certain!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!
MATLA KE A RONA!
POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

* *

COMRADE NAICKER'S LAST INTERVIEW

Reprinted from World Marxist Review, *April 1977*

Honest journalists in South Africa are victims of oppression and persecution. One of the reasons why many of us are in exile is because we have consistently opposed the anti-communist policies and ideology of the racist regime.

One of the more vicious forms of anti-communism is anti-Sovietism which manifests itself in efforts to block the strengthening of friendly and mutually advantageous relations between African countries and the Soviet Union and to diminish co-operation between them, to deprive the newly independent countries of the much needed support coming from the socialist community. Using the pretext of fighting "Communist expansion", international imperialism would like to preserve the racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia, protect the interests of the monopoly multinational companies operating in South Africa and justify the new US naval bases in this region and in the Indian Ocean. Not to struggle against anti-communism and anti-Sovietism means allowing imperialism and racism to continue their colonial and neo-colonial policies in Africa.

With regard to this I should like to quote chief Lutuli, former ANC President and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Asked by US journalists, what he thought of the Communists in the ANC he said: "Yes, we have Communists and I hope we shall have a few more because they are the hardest working people I have found, they are most reliable and, as far as I am concerned, so long as they support the struggle for the national democratic revolution, they can be good Communists as well."

Regrettably, communism is used as a red herring to divert even some African leaders from the main problems existing in Southern Africa such as economic support for apartheid by international imperialism. Realism in such questions now is of special importance. And that is why honest journalists cannot and must not tolerate anti-communism. Otherwise, how can they be objective, how can they contribute to the efforts for detente and social progress?

In such colonial and oppressed countries as South Africa, the national-liberation struggle is part of the struggle for detente and peaceful coexistence because the national-liberation forces are for peace, they are for life. But, some people ask: "How is it that you, a revolutionary, are for disarmament and detente?" The answer to this I think is that there is no difference between the struggle for disarmament, for detente and for national liberation. The fight for disarmament means disarming the forces of war and, in our region, the racist regimes, it means helping the forces of peace in Africa. Reactionary Western journalists portray Vorster as something of a strategist of peaceful coexistence in Africa. The Soweto uprising showed how wrong this is. I was in Britain during the uprising and it is true that the British press tried to confuse the public into thinking that this was no more than a spontaneous uprising. However, there were some journalists in Britain who saw this as something much more than a spontaneous burst of indignation. They saw it as an overall struggle and many had to admit that it was inspired by the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party as an overall struggle against apartheid, for the overthrow of the Vorster racist regime.

The Materialist Theory of History

by DIALEGO

(This is the final article of a series intended as an introduction to the theory of dialectical and historical materialism)

What are the forces at work in society which bring about revolution? How can we explain the dynamics of social change? Why do we say that social and political upheavals are *inevitable* in class-divided societies?

These are vital questions for revolutionaries to think about today. At a time when the imperialist world is desperately trying to "damp down" the explosive contradictions in southern Africa and deflect the course of the liberation movements into harmless, neo-colonial channels, a scientific understanding of the nature of revolution is essential indeed, for the world of political struggle is a harsh one and it is not enough to tackle questions of social change simply in terms of what we would "like" to see happen or may "dream" about. Effective leadership of the forces of liberation rests upon an ability to creatively combine a careful and continuing analysis of particular events (e.g. the struggles of Soweto and the developments since June 16th, 1976, the twists and turns of U.S. strategy towards Zimbabwe and Namibia), with an *overall* understanding of the nature of revolution itself and the reasons for historical change.

It is because communists seek to link the particular with the general in this way that they can claim, in the words of the *Manifesto*, to "always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole": if they form an advanced and resolute section of the movement, that is because theoretically

> they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement. (1)

A precise understanding of particular events must be linked to an understanding of history and society itself.

Previous articles have looked at the principles of dialectical materialism and the way in which Marxist philosophy helps us understand the world in general: what must now be tackled is the way in which we relate dialectical materialism to the social development of man – the study of what is generally called "historical materialism" or "the materialist theory of history". An analysis of this theory must begin with a consideration of

(i) The Nature of Men as Social Producers

All theories of society and history must operate with some conception of "human nature" for they are theories which seek to explain what happens in *all* societies and what determines the way people behave. It is sometimes said that Marxists do not believe in human nature but this is only true in the sense that we reject any conception of a static or unchanging "human nature", for we know that people's ideas, behaviour and institutions are continually changing – that human nature can be found in many different forms. But the question still needs to be posed: what is it about men and their society which makes this change both possible and necessary?

It is the fact that human beings have to *produce* all the things which they need in order to survive: they cannot simply "live off" nature in the way animals do. The animal, as Engels notes,

> merely *uses* his environment and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, masters it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals (2)

and it is only in terms of such a distinction that we can understand man's historical "nature" as a being who produces.

But do not some animals, particularly the higher primates like apes and chimpanzees, use their hands to build nests, grasp sticks and even hurl stones at their enemies? The truth is that human beings, even at the most primitive technical stage of their development, can accomplish something which no ape has ever been seen to do and that is to make *tools* with which to produce and to use their tools to *alter* the world around them in a conscious and deliberate way.

Mankind, Engels was to say,

> must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc; (3)

and this need to produce is described by Marx and Engels as

> a fundamental condition of all history, which, today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life. (4)

But why should this approach to history be called "materialist" in character? It is materialist

(a) because the activity of production itself brings people into direct and continuing contact with the forces of nature (or the world of matter); and

(b) because production is necessary to human survival whether people are aware of this fact or not. Hence Marx often refers to production as a "material" process which people enter into "independent of their will". (5) With the development of classes in society so that a privileged few do the "thinking" and an exploited majority have to create the wealth, the materialist basis to human existence is obscured by the philosophers and priests, etc. rather in the way that many white people in South Africa don't think very much about the importance of production and what it involves because they have black servants and employees who do the real work for them! Nevertheless material production is the most important fact of human life and it explains why

(c) men can only be understood as individuals who survive in a *society*. Production is essentially a collective activity in which people have to work together so that when we speak about social production, we necessarily refer to the *relationships* which people enter into when they produce. Even the "Robinson Crusoes" and the hermits of the world can only live in isolation because they have first acquired the ability to think, speak and produce by working in society.

But in order to explain how the nature of men as social producers affects the way they act in society, we need to look more closely at the two aspects which constitute the production process:

(ii) Productive Forces and the Relations of Production

The activity of production involves first and foremost the making of tools or the development of technology whether we think of the manufacture of spears for hunting or computers for programming. This technology includes not only the tools or machines themselves but all the raw material, technical skills and know-how which go into making and using them and it is described in Marxist theory as a *force of production.* It is obvious that every time a fresh invention is made, these forces of production change accordingly.

Tools whether simple or sophisticated have to be operated by people and since people must enter into a definite set of relationships in order to produce, the "forces of production" are necessarily linked to the "relations of production". Since the way in which we relate to one another or cooperate in production depends upon the kind of technology we are actually using, we may say therefore that

> the relations of production into which people enter are determined by the forces of production which they have created.

As Marx puts it,

> social relations are closely bound up with productive forces . . . The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist. (6)

Thus, for example, in hunting societies in the stage of "primitive communism", everyone works together as a team and there is insufficient wealth produced to allow some to sit idly by while others do the work for them. The collective way in which people work together determines the collective or communal way in which they share out and own the wealth they produce. Productive forces determine the relations of production.

What happens when these productive forces change so that hunting gives way to agriculture and some individuals can accumulate, by fair means or foul, more wealth than they actually need? The relations of production must also change for, to put it simply, a herd of cattle can be owned privately in the way that a herd of buffalo cannot. It is now profitable to systematically plunder your neighbours, make them work for you as slaves, and develop private property in crops and cattle. A clan or tribal society owning the means of production in common is gradually transformed into a society divided into classes: the wealth produced by one group is owned by another and although the development of class antagonisms and exploitation had not developed to any significant degree in much of pre-colonial Africa, the changing relations of production can ultimately be explained by changes taking place in the productive forces. Every change in these forces – whether we think of the invention of the plough to till the land or the spinning jenny which mechanised the weaving loom – must transform production relations.

Indeed, it is the dramatic change in the forces of production brought about by capitalism so that thousands of people work together in mines and factories using highly advanced technology, which makes it not merely possible but ultimately *necessary* for private ownership to give way to social ownership and in conditions of growing abundance for *everyone* to at once take part in production and yet at the same time, enjoy a life of security and freedom. A socialist and communist society cannot however simply come about because people "want" it: new forces of production alone make it possible. This is why it would be naive and utopian to try to establish socialist relations of production – where the means of production are owned in common – in a society where most people were still individual handicraft producers or peasant farmers working small plots of land in isolation from one another. The relations of production must, in Marx's words, be "appropriate to a given stage in the development of their forces of production". (7)

It is only on the basis of developed industry and cooperative and collective agriculture that socialism can be built, and since most African countries who have recently freed themselves from imperialist and neo-colonial control suffer from serious technological backwardness, they need to pursue policies of non-capitalist development in order to create the forces of production necessary to sustain socialist relations of production. In South Africa itself, however, things are rather different, and following the national democratic revolution, the mechanised agriculture and developed industrial base (already created by the capitalists) would make it possible to build socialism much more rapidly.

Although, as we have seen, the forces of production in any society determine the relations of production and changes in the relations are only possible because of changes in the productive forces, it should not be thought that these changes occur smoothly and automatically. In fact, the very opposite is true particularly when we are speaking of societies divided into antagonistic classes. Here not only do the relations of production "lag behind" changes in technology, but the production relations actively resist the need to adapt and change, they become obsolete and outmoded and enormous pressure has to build up in society before the transformation of production relations can take place and they are brought into line with the altered production forces. In fact, it is precisely this pressure which builds up to force old production relations to adapt to the new forces of production that is the real cause of every social and political revolution.

In Marx's words,

> at a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production . . . from forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. (8)

Thus we can now formulate the basic propositions of the materialist theory of history by saying

(a) every alteration in the way a society produces (its forces of production) brings about a change in the way people cooperate in production (the production relations) and because changes in technology are natural and unavoidable in all societies, we can describe the need for the relations of production to adapt to the forces of production as the *most basic law of human history* – the real explanation for all social change. But

(b) because the development of exploitation, class divisions and the institution of private property arises at a particular stage in history, the adaption of the relations to the forces of production cannot take place "gradually" and "continuously". A revolution is needed in order to take power out of the hands of one class and vest it in another in order to make it possible for the relations and forces of production to once again correspond.

To understand more clearly why it is that class divisions have the effect of obstructing the adjustment of productive relations to productive forces, it is now necessary to introduce into the theory, the concepts of

(iii) Basis and Superstructure

When people enter into a particular set of production relations, they do so through the entire range of social institutions which function to regulate, justify and protect these particular relations. Just as the forces of production cannot exist in the real world without the people who cooperate in a definite way to work them, so the relations of production only develop because men are also members of a family, are guided by a morality and sometimes a religion, accept certain cultural values, and in class-divided societies, have their lives ultimately regulated by the coercive machinery of the state. And just as productive forces determine the relations of production, so for their part, the production relations constitute what we call the economic *basis* of society which determines all the social institutions and ideas which make these production relations possible – the decisive force which moulds "the general process of social, political and intellectual life". (9)

Marx describes this economic basis as "the real foundation" of society upon which, as he puts it, there

> arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. (10)

Marx uses the term "superstructure" to describe society's institutions and ideas because he argues that these aspects of our life do not simply dwell in a self-contained world of their own but have their *origin* in the way we relate to one another in the realm of material production. They are a "superstructure" because they can only be understood, in the last analysis, in terms of a society's economic "basis".

Thus, for example, it is not simply a "coincidence" that in South Africa you have the vicious exploitation of the black people in the factories, mines and farms existing "alongside" a political system which denies them any say in the government of the country existing "alongside" social and religious prejudices which claim that inequality is "natural" and that "races" should be kept apart. Nor is it enough to simply note that all these facets of apartheid "hang together" and are related. The fact is that it is not the ideas of a few eccentric professors from Potchefstrom or Pretoria which have brought about the nightmarish policies of "separate development" – it is the demand for cheap black labour by the industrialists, mine owners and the big farmers. In so far as economic realities come into conflict with pet schemes of this or that apartheid ideologue, it is the ideas and not the realities which suffer! It is the basis which ultimately determines the superstructure. It is not, as Marx says,

> the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. (11)

The secret of every society is to be found neither in its politics nor in its ideas but in the precise character of its production relations and it is only by studying these that we can ultimately explain why a society has the kind of culture, family structure, political system and "spiritual life" that it does. This is because it is the role of the superstructure in a class-divided society to justify and protect, to entrench and institutionalise a privileged and oppressive way of life so that the owners of the means of production – the ruling class – try to *fossilise* the kind of production relations which favour their interests and prevent these relations from smoothly adapting to the ever-changing forces of production. This is why an oppressed people in fighting for their freedom cannot merely transform obsolete relations of production without at the same time radically altering the entire political and ideological superstructure which is rooted in and serves to perpetuate economic exploitation.

It is sometimes thought (usually by the critics of Marxism) that concepts like "productive force" and "productive relation", economic "basis" and ideological "superstructure" refer to easily separable slices of reality so that one can actually point to a "basis" in one part of society and a "superstructure" in another. This in fact is not so. In the real world, technology and social relationships, economic, cultural and political institutions all inextricably interpenetrate and the concepts which historical materialism employs have been separated out in the form of an *analysis* in order to produce a scientific theory of change.

Indeed, the very need for a scientific theory of change arises from the fact that what *really* happens when societies develop or revolutions occur should never be confused with what the people taking part in the events may *think* or *imagine* is going on. The distinction between the "basis" and "superstructure" makes it possible for us to distinguish the real roots of a revolution – the conflict between society's relations and forces of production – and the events of the superstructure: the arena of politics and ideology in which, as Marx says, "men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out". (12)

This does not mean that the superstructure can be ignored for the political and ideological factors of the struggle help us to understand why events take the particular form they do. Thus, for example, in analysing the rebellion in Soweto, we need to examine the political events very carefully, taking note of what the young revolutionaries are saying and thinking, what the reactionary police chiefs and white politicians imagine is going on, how the Bantustan 'leaders' view the events, what the reaction of business opinion is, at home and abroad, to the new mood of protest and defiance, etc. All these aspects of the "superstructure" require our attention, but if we wish to penetrate to the heart of the situation we must follow Marx's advice and

> distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of a natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. (13)

From the superstructure we learn how the particular ideas and personalities, parties and politicians shape the event so that it turns out the way it does: from the basis we find why the event *really* occurred in terms of the underlying, deeply rooted causes which exist "beneath the surface", as it were. In the case of Soweto, the political and ideological aspects of the situation explain the role of the protests against Afrikaans, Bantu education and the whole system of white domination; but for the basic cause of the explosion we must look to the vicious economic exploitation upon which the apartheid system rests – the unbearable poverty, insecurity, joblessness and inflation, sanctioned by racial discrimination and protected by the machine guns and barbed wire of a ruthless dictatorship. The superstructure *expresses* the struggle as people battle in the streets, refuse to go to work and join the ranks of the liberation movement: the basis actually *explains* it as the uprising of the African, Coloured and Indian people who are robbed by a racist white minority of the wealth which they collectively produce. While millions work in the mines, factories and on the farms, a clique of monopoly capitalists privately own South Africa's immense riches – this is the root of the conflict, and of the protest, struggle and movement towards revolution, for it is here, in the economic basis of society, that the relations and forces of production collide with a raw and searing intensity. It is here that the events have their real source.

The fact that the economic basis of a society provides us with the *ultimate* cause of its development does not and cannot mean that it is the *only* cause of social development, for this would imply, for example, trying to study capitalism in South Africa without taking account of the way in which the army, police, courts, judges, administration, propaganda are used by the ruling class to keep them in power. A basis and superstructure must always be examined *together*, for the superstructure not only arises out of a given basis but *reacts* back upon economic developments and decisively influences them. Is it not clear that the battery of racist laws in South Africa – a *political* factor – gives economic exploitation its peculiarly vicious form? No account of development is possible unless all the political, ideological and cultural factors are carefully considered, for the economic causes cannot be meaningfully understood "on their own".

The colonial character of South African society, the influence of Calvinism and Cape liberalism, the heritage of popular struggle against conquest and enslavement, the awakening of a national African consciousness – all these aspects of the superstructure help to explain why capitalism and the fight against it has developed as it has in the South African context. To simply ignore these aspects on the grounds that only economic factors "count" – that historical materialism is some kind of one-sided "economic determinism" – would lead to a grotesquely distorted understanding of reality.

What the Marxist theory of history argues is this: all factors are important and all need to be taken into account but while the aspects of the superstructure – where people express their consciousness of what is going on – determine the *form* of the development, the economic basis is *ultimately* decisive for it is only here that we can understand why *in the last analysis* society develops at all.

It follows of course that the more clearly we understand the dynamics of history in terms of the relationship between basis and superstructure, the conflict between the forces and relations of production, the more consciously we can control the course of events through the strategies and tactics we adopt for revolutionary change.

(iv) Historical Laws and Modes of Production

The materialist theory of history, as I have so far outlined it, can be said to apply to all societies known to man, for where people produce, so forces of production must determine production relations and a superstructure arise out of an economic base. But although production is a common feature of every society, the character or, as Marx calls it, "the mode" of production differs from one historical period to another. "In broad outline", Marx writes, "the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the development of society" (14) and as economic formations or "modes of production" each is more advanced than the one preceding it – technology has been more extensively developed and new and "better" forms of exploitation have been devised. Clearly we are not talking about "progress" in any straightforward moral sense, for as Engels has pointed out,

> every step forward in production is at the same time a step backward in the position of the oppressed class. (15)

so that although "potentially" things may get better, in practice they get worse. Let us look briefly at what each of these modes of production entails. In what Marx calls

(a) the "Asiatic" mode (so called because of its general geographical location) the land is still owned by the community but the irrigation system which makes it possible to develop agriculture is controlled and administered by kings and priests who rely upon slaves to produce some of the wealth; however the use of slavery and the production of goods for sale in a market becomes much more dominant in

(b) the "ancient" or slave mode of production (so called because it existed in ancient Greece and Rome) in which with the development of trade and commodity production, the land itself becomes privately owned; under

(c) the "feudal" mode of production: the exploitation of slaves (in the sense of people owned like cattle by their masters) gives way to the exploitation of serfs who are bound to serve a particular lord by working so many days a year for him, fighting his wars and paying dues to the church, etc. The highest and the most deceptive form of exploitation exists however in

(d) the capitalist mode of production in which not only is the production of commodities the overriding form of economic activity, but people who have no wealth of their own are forced by economic circumstances to hire out their services (or "labour power") to a capitalist, so that people themselves become commodities who are paid according to the amount of food and shelter they need to continue functioning as wealth-producing machines. When they are no longer required by the capitalist, he simply sacks them.

It is worth remembering that each of these "modes of production" are extremely general categories and no actual society, past or present, will necessarily fit them exactly. They serve only as a *guide* to understanding the development of history and although as Marx puts it, each mode of production is an epoch "marking progress in the development of society", this does not mean that any particular society either has or has to progress through each of the four stages as though each society is preordained to clamber up the same historical ladder. In fact every society is in its particular form quite unique but these distinct features can only be appreciated when analysed through the general concepts which apply to all societies of a particular kind. Thus for example, the concept of a "capitalist mode of production" – a general term – helps us to identify and explain the peculiar features of apartheid in the South African system. In other words, a general theory of history and society is essential to any "concrete study of concrete conditions" because without it, we would not know where to begin. The materialist theory of history should never therefore be thought of as a "preconceived scheme" but rather as a guide to understanding historical realities as they really are.

Because, for example, capitalist relations of production had nowhere developed in Africa before the colonial period, this does not mean that before the people can build socialism they must endure a capitalist epoch! What we call the "historical laws" at work in a given mode of production relate to particular forces and relations of production which have developed and there is no reason why societies in Africa which are guided by a Marxist leadership and assisted by the socialist countries, cannot change these forces and relations so that they establish a socialist society based upon a socialist mode of production. There is nothing in the Marxist theory of history which says that everyone has to follow the identical path of development.

What the materialist theory of history seeks to establish is that while every society has its own specific features which fit generally into a mode of production ranging from "primitive communism" to developed socialism, nevertheless particular laws of development are themselves determined by the most basic and general historical law: the adaption of a society's relations of production to their productive forces. The law lies at the heart of the Marxist theory of history and it explains the development of all societies without exception.

In class-divided societies, as we have seen, forces and relations of production come into sharp conflict, whereas in societies in which class divisions are disappearing (as in the socialist countries), this conflict or "contradiction" between the forces and relations can be relatively smoothly and painlessly overcome (as for example happened in 1956/57 in the Soviet Union when new forms of planning were introduced), for now there are no entrenched class interests or privileged "ways of life" which social change threatens. In a society in which, as Marx puts it, "there are no more classes and class antagonisms", then "*social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*" (16), but although the state as the embodiment of class conflict withers away, and differences can be settled through persuasion, debate and the direct action of the people themselves, change continues as it always has and always must. There will always be a continual movement in the growth of productive forces, this will require the continuous adjustment of productive relations and society's superstructure and so we will need to continue studying the particular manifestations of the basic law of historical development which must rank as one of Marx's great scientific discoveries.

Those who claim therefore that Marxism contradicts itself by looking towards the establishment of some kind of "perfect" communist society in which historical development "runs out of steam" and grinds to a halt have not really understood what the materialist conception of history is all about. In fact the development first of socialism in which a planned economy is built and then of communism in which class divisions finally disappear and the machinery of the state dies out, represents the *start* of a new history for man – a history in which the forces of production can be consciously regulated and controlled, changes are made without wars or revolution and a new world arises which can be called human in the fullest sense of the term.

Notes

(1) "The Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Collected Works* 6, (Moscow/London 1976), p. 497.
(2) *Dialectics of Nature*, (Moscow, 1964), p. 182.
(3) "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx", *Selected Works* in one vol., (Moscow/London, 1968), p. 435.
(4) "The German Ideology", *Collected Works* 5, (Moscow/London, 1976), p. 42.
(5) Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, (Moscow/London, 1971), p. 20.
(6) "The Poverty of Philosophy", *Collected Works* 6, op. cit., p. 166.
(7) Preface to the *Critique*, op. cit., p. 20.
(8) Ibid., p. 21.
(9) Ibid., p. 20-21.
(10) Ibid., p. 20.
(11) Ibid., p. 21.
(12) Ibid.
(13) Ibid.
(14) Ibid.
(15) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, (Lawrence and Wishart, 1972), p. 231.
(16) "The Poverty of Philosophy", *Collected Works* 6, op. cit., p. 212.

On the question of Human Rights

by JOSE A. BENITEZ

> **"Of late, the imperialists have become obsessed with talking about human rights. For them, human rights mean the right to racial discrimination, the oppression of women, the plunder of peoples' natural resources. For the imperialists, human rights mean gambling, vice, poverty, and ignorance."**
>
> **– FIDEL**

A group of men is discussing the use of tiny poisonous darts which do not leave visible traces on the human body. The poison is saxitoxin. Six tenths of a milligram can kill a person. The darts have 10.9 grams.

This is not a scene from the time of the Borgias in the 15th century; it is part of imperialist policy in the 20th century. The men are agents of the CIA, which in our times is synonymous to poison, murder, malevolent cunning, hatred, intrigue and dehumanization.

Saxitoxin is manufactured at the laboratories of the United States Army in Fort Detrick, Maryland. The CIA, whose headquarters are in Langley – about ten kilometers from Washington – with a huge, secret budget provided by the U.S. Government, is an official organization of the imperialists, who "of late, have become obsessed with talking about human rights."

There is a saying that "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." The imperialists' house must be shattered by now.

This is the case because it is the highest stage of a system which, as Marx said, came into the world oozing blood and mire from every pore, and because it runs counter to the right to life – the basic right of man and of the peoples.

From this basic right to live, which imperialism defiles and batters, come all other human rights: the right to the fruits of one's labour, the right to an education; the right to medical and hospital care; the right to an old age free of worry; the right of women to social and political equality; the right of all the discriminated of the earth to destroy the barriers of discrimination; the right of peoples to regain control over their natural resources and kick out their exploiters; the right of states to sovereignty; the right of the colonized to do away with the deadly system of colonialism and neocolonialism; the right to the full dignity of man.

The right to see children grow up happy, the right to see a worker or peasant work with enthusiasm, the right to see an old person die in peace and the right to eat one's bread without tears are also human rights.

The unlimited exercise of these rights represents peace and happiness, but the imperialists, who, "of late have become obsessed with talking about human rights," hate peace and happiness for humanity insofar as they imply an end to class privileges. They hate that which grows and that which uplifts; they hate the irate action of the exploited, the mutilated and the dying; they hate the impatience of those whose stomachs are empty and look angrily at the stopwatch of hunger; they hate those who build barriers and carry rifles to struggle to stop and destroy them.

Hatred is their "human right," along with racial discrimination, oppression of women, plunder of natural resources of peoples, "gambling, vice, poverty and ignorance."

They seek to uphold a world of exploitation and racial discrimination – a draining system. They try to perpetuate a world where peoples live in terror over the constant flow of corpses left behind by capitalist businessmen, mercenaries and CIA agents; in short, a world of violence and prostitution, of desperate men and intimidated children, of ruins, of sorrow, of exploiters and exploited.

The history of imperialism is the history of the violation of human rights in our time. This is no idle claim. There was the intervention in Cuba and the first imperialist war, in 1898; the theft of the Panama

Canal in 1904; the seven interventions in Honduras between 1907 and 1925; the military occupation of Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1916; the war in Korea and the war of genocide in Vietnam; the mercenary invasion at Playa Giron in 1961; the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965; the acts of piracy – in the 20th century – against Cuban fishing boats; the recruiting and organizing of mercenaries against peoples of Africa in the last decade; the complicity and ideological affinity with and aid for the fascist regimes in South Africa, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil. The places and events are taken at random from imperialism's sinister record.

Political murder is another story.

The hands of imperialism were behind the murders of Mexican President Francisco Madero and U.S. labour leader Andrea Salcedo; the crime against Sacco and Vanzetti; the murders of Julio Antonio Mella, Augusto Cesar Sandino, Jesus Menendez, Antonio Guiteras, and hundreds of other patriots from the Rio Grande to Patagonia. Did Albizu Campos, who spent most of his life in jail, in the struggle against imperialism and under political harassment, die a natural death?

In the last 20 years, imperialism has murdered or ordered the assassination of men and women who struggled for a better world, for the liberation of peoples, human justice, universal dignity, an end to the exploitation of man by man or to make the Human Rights Charter something other than a dead letter filed away at the UN. The Rosenbergs, Medgar W. Evers, Malcolm X, Viola Liuzzo, Martin Luther King, George Jackson, Patrice Lumumba, Pio Pinto, Ben Barka, Amilcar Cabral, Rene Schneider, Juan Jose Torres, Carlos Prats, Salvador Allende, Orlando Letelier, Kamal Joumblatt and Marien Ngouabi – the complete list of political murders is endless.

The gun and bullets that killed Che Guevara were made by the imperialists, and the man who pulled the trigger was at the service of imperialism.

Genocide is yet another story.

Three decades ago, staging a spectacular show of power, imperialism turned Hiroshima and Nagasaki into ashes in three minutes, and 300,000 human beings became flaming torches, the children were marked for life, and everything was left in ruins.

A few years ago it used napalm to roast thousands of brave Vietnamese, destroyed the fruits of their labour, dropped fire-bombs on children going to school and who never got there, and gunned down mothers watching over their children or suckling them for the last time.

Racial discrimination is still another story and so are social inequality, injustice, contempt for human dignity and the assault on the world of the poor.

The tongues of the imperialists, who "of late, have become obsessed with talking about human rights," will be silenced one day when they finally meet their end.

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Letters to the Editor

CHINA, THE ENEMY OF AFRICAN LIBERATION

From Charles Oladipo Akinde, Anti-Poverty Movement of Nigeria

The current rapprochement of China and the reactionary elements in Africa has come to every right-thinking African, whether socialist, liberal, nationalist or even conservative as a great shock and a clear betrayal of the Chinese claim of friendship with the oppressed people all over the world.

The Chinese collusion with the United States and South Africa on African affairs does not only expose the divergence between Chinese words and deeds. It also shows beyond doubt the nationalist bias of China's foreign policy.

For some time now China has been showing its anti-African face. It has often supported the rival groups in any national liberation struggle waged by the African people irrespective of their ideological stance. In Angola, during the national liberation war, China, under the pretext that the Soviet Union and Cuba supported the MPLA, threw its weight behind the rival group UNITA which was using South African regular troops and mercenaries to raid the southern part of that country.

On many occasions China voted against the admission of Angola into the UN along with the United States in the Security Council. Its policy in the current Zaire crisis is another eye-opener.

Zaire has in the past voted against the admission of the People's Republic of China into the UN in collusion with the US, which supported the Formosa (Taiwan) regime. Mr Justin Bomboko, Mobutu's Foreign Minister, at a press conference in February 1967 said that "in 1966 Congo (Zaire) had again voted against the entry of People's China to the UN because it condemned the country's subversive activities in Africa".

China's opinion of Mobutu's regime at that time was expressed in the newspaper *Jenmin Jih Pao* of April 15, 1967, in an article entitled: "Don't let U.S. Lackey Mobutu Bluff and Deceive" which exposed the sinister diplomacy of Mobutu who was then trying to win back favour in Africa by posing as the inheritor of the mantle of Patrice Lumumba. There were numerous other attacks on Mobutu in *New China News Agency*.

What has been responsible for China's change of policy towards the Zaire regime? There has been no change in Mobutu's internal or external policy as far as I know.

China opposed the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, it opposed ZAPU in Zimbabwe, it opposes the Communist Party of South African and SWAPO in Namibia. Why? China has only one explanation: because the Soviet Union is there. It is now fashionable for China to oppose everything which the Soviet Union supports even when such a policy is detrimental to the interests of the people concerned.

China pursues its international policy only in accordance with its own national interest. Events throughout the world testify to this. China's role in Indonesia played the Communists into the hands of the country's hangman and resulted in the killing of all the communists after the overthrow of Sukarno. China's role in supporting the Chilean military dictatorship resulted in the killing of the communists there. China's role in Indochina, especially in Vietnam, prolonged the liberation war there. While North Vietnam was being bombed by US planes, China was entertaining the author of the atrocity Richard Nixon. China was also opposed to the struggle of the people of Bangladesh. During the Nigerian civil war, China supported Biafra.

Why is China always tailing behind the US?

Now that the centre of the world revolutionary struggle has shifted to Africa, it would be well for the peoples of Africa to be aware of all the issues at stake. It was reported recently that China and South Africa might form an alliance against what they called "Red imperialism".

Apartheid South Africa's Information and Interior Minister Connie Mulder said in their Parliament that "in the present political context, South Africa could opt for a non-aligned policy and seek from Peking material and political support". Dr Mulder was said to have quoted a Chinese proverb which says "the enemies of my enemies are my friends". (*Daily Times* 19.4.1977, page 9.)

It is a known fact that China has at no time heeded the sanctions imposed by the UN on the apartheid regime in South Africa. China buys raw materials from South Africa and it sells for them in return. China supports the EEC and the military policies of the NATO alliance when they are clearly anti-progressive and counter-revolutionary. Why? Because it is these countries which are opposed to the Soviet Union in one way or another.

African Marxists must know their friends from their enemies. All we need at the present stage of our revolution is world-wide solidarity of all anti-imperialist peoples. In Europe, Latin America, Asia, Australia, wherever peoples oppose imperialism and colonialism they are our allies. Although we do not believe in power blocs, we approve of all countries which genuinely assist us in the battle against our internal and external enemies and detractors.

China's policy is anti-African all round, despite high-sounding pronouncements to the contrary. A nation without principle, like an individual, cannot command respect from anyone.

* * * * * * * *

From Spider Hintsa, South Africa

The present "pseudo-communist rulers" of People's China must stop deceiving the world that China is still a socialist state. They are gradually steering their once mighty country out of the socialist progressive world.

Comrade Kenneth Kaunda once said some wise words: "If your enemy keeps on praising you and patting you on the back, there must be something wrong with you". Today the world's worst capitalist exploiting dictators and fascist oppressors of the toiling masses are singing songs of praise for the help they get from People's China which in turn enables them to continue their sordid efforts of exploiting the working man.

Today the fascist oppressors of South Africa see a possible ally in People's China against what they call "Russian imperialism", which means they work together in a general struggle against socialism. Today

China is closer to the capitalist-imperialist world than ever. Their so-called support to the liberation movement is channeled to the reactionary forces that always seek to halt the great march of socialism in the world, more especially in Africa. They support the corrupt regime of Mobutu, who is even richer than his own state. They support FNLA and Roberto and other reactionary forces. China is becoming a willing tool of the CIA.

The Chinese people will have to rid their country of these political maggots before they go too far and retard progress in this country.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have proved beyond doubt that they are the real backbone of the national liberation struggle waged by all progressive forces of the world. They are the real genuine friends of the African people. One does not have to be a communist to see this naked truth.

THE COMMON STRUGGLE OF THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES TO FORGE THE POLITICAL INSTRUMENTS OF REVOLUTION

(Statement of the central organ of the Party of the Socialist Vanguard in Algeria. Issued January 1977. Translated by the African Communist.)

The adoption of the National Charter, the implementation of the Constitution and the presidential elections have begun to create a new situation. This situation is full of hope but also of new problems and dangers for our revolution.

The political choice made during the first months after independence, against the capitalist road, has been followed for more than ten years of great socio-economic achievements of a national-democratic kind and with a socialist perspective. These changes have brought the following question to the forefront: is it possible to preserve these gains and to advance further without creating and reinforcing the political instruments of revolution, making them powerful and effective, raising their qualitative role on the basis of correct and mobilising policies?

All progressives realise that this is an essential condition for the completion, in a durable manner, of national democratic tasks and the creation of all the social, economic, political and ideological conditions for the transition to socialism. All conscious patriots consider it necessary to make every effort to forge such instruments. This represents a political consensus of the utmost value, which is based on twin realities: on the one hand, upon the harmony achieved between the tasks to be done and the levels of consciousness and of organisation and on the other hand upon a definite advance in the organised movement, thanks to the increasingly convergent efforts of all progressive forces.

In this new situation, to which all Algerian revolutionary forces have contributed, what meaning, what new dimensions does the activity of our party take on in all its different forms? What new contribution can communists bring to this great political task, in revolutionary continuity with their earlier contributions?

The National Charter may open the Way to a Unifying Process of Historic Importance

Many progressives committed to socialism may conclude in good faith that the National Charter has provided an adequate politico-ideological base to allow the appearance in the near future of the great party which will be able fully to mobilise the masses for revolutionary tasks.

The Charter is a revolutionary and unifying document, a basis containing numerous and solid points of agreement between patriots, between progressives and between partisans of socialism, including some which deal with fundamental questions. It is for this reason that we have firmly supported it.

Nevertheless, organisational forms will not arise spontaneously upon the basis of these points of agreement. Effort and perseverance will remain necessary to arrive at the organisational structures required for the great tasks enunciated by the Charter. This effort will involve several stages and various intermediate objectives. This is all the more true because of the contents of the Charter and the wide range of supporters which it has. All of them must take carefully considered steps involving transitional and diversified organisational forms along the road of progressive unity.

One realises, then, that the Charter contains directions and tasks for a combination of forces and tendencies offering it total or partial support. Among these there are a variety of motives, there are disagree-ments and there are reservations on certain points. The range extends from anti-imperialist nationalists, who may even be conservative, to patriots committed to scientific socialism, quite apart from those who simply find in the Charter (and still more in the Constitution) their most immediate demands and aspirations.

On the other hand, the Charter also contains more advanced ideas, common to the partisans of socialism. But as regards these more advanced ideas, the Charter also reflects the fact that existing socialist tendencies, in spite of their common basic objectives, have not achieved a sufficient political and ideological homogeneity. The Charter moreover recognises in a positive fashion its own evolutionary and unfinished character, which corresponds both to the achievements and to the limitations of our revolution in its present stage. The ideas inscribed in it, fruit of past struggles, will continue to evolve in relationship with the reality and the progress of united revolutionary action.

From these conclusions, it follows that:

1. The Charter can open up a new unifying process which may be extremely fertile for our people and our revolution, both on the level of a large anti-imperialist and progressive base and on the level of the vanguard.
2. This historic unifying process cannot be reduced into preconceived or unsuitable schematic forms or methods, the sterility of which the recent past has confirmed. It must, unless it is to be absorbed, take account of developing social, political and ideological realities.
3. A distinction must be made between
    a) the vast political movement which will embrace within the framework of the broadest concepts of the Charter, and in a variety of forms, all anti-imperialist forces, taking due account of their specific characteristics;
    b) the guiding party whose task it is to regroup the tendencies favourable to the most advanced objectives and ideas of the Charter, that is to say the partisans of socialism, on the basis of ever more far-reaching political and ideological clarifications.

As always, a special responsibility lies upon the most consistent revolutionaries, who work in the perspective of the unique vanguard party. It is for these latter, wherever they may find themselves at the present moment, to continue *together* with the discovery and realisation of the forces for change and for unity which will mature in action, in the midst of the principal tasks of the moment, just as in recent years they have played an arousing and mobilising role. It is for them to avoid excessive haste, rigidity of policy or of organisation, the artificial creation or maintenance of antagonisms. Knowing there is no use in organisation for organisation's sake, they will have to take care to create living organisational forms which will serve the tasks in hand and will grow and deepen through concrete achievement. *Unity of action and thought* is the most solid foundation for all organisational unity.

These are the ideas which will continue to guide the activities of communists.

The Principal Directions of Efforts to Build Two Irreplaceable Political Instruments

An increasing number of progressives share the desire to build, as rapdily and as firmly as possible, two vital political instruments:

1. *An assembly of the broad patriotic and anti-imperialist masses* around the tasks of liberation, of construction, of development and of social progress. This great assembly will find its best expression in the activity of a *Front,* whatever may in future be the terminology and structural forms of our national life – it not being obligatory for these structural forms to be those of an alliance of parties. The essential point is that such a Front can and must embrace without exclusiveness, all those who are carrying out tasks of importance, consistent with the national interest, including members of the middle classes and the patriotic elements among the national bourgeoisie.

2. The *great vanguard party,* founded on the theory of scientific socialism, which has proved itself on the universal level, in historically differing national situations. Such a party will be able to inspire and guide, both by its own action and through the action of the larger Front, not only the achievement of the tasks of people's democracy but also those of socialist revolution and construction.

How are we to advance towards these two great projects?

Communists consider it necessary to make immediate efforts to realise three inseparable conditions which are also short-term objectives. The first is *to develop a constant and expanding movement among the popular and labouring masses* around the tasks of social progress, linked to the aspirations and the material needs of the urban and rural workers. This condition will be realised by means of conscious and profoundly democratic mobilisation of mass socio-political organisations.

The second conerns the need for *renewal and reinforcement of the FLN**, to make it more suitable for revolutionary tasks in accordance with the powers and duties allotted to it by the Constitution.

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* Front de Liberation Nationale – the liberation movement which led the struggle for Algerian independence.

This official political organisation, whose present condition is well known, now shows itself in somewhat vague forms derived from the historical situations of the liberation struggle (which has led it to be described sometimes as a "Party-Front" and sometimes as a "Party-Nation"). Its direction is still uncertain and it is torn between the popular revolutionary drive on the one hand and conservative bourgeois influences on the other. Given the tasks laid down by the Charter and an improved class base, it could acquire a revolutionary-democratic content and realise its full potentialities, evolving either in the direction of a mass Front or in that of a vanguard party.

The third condition concerns the *forces and movements of socialism, wherever they may be found,* which agree in spite of their divergences to joint action within the framework of the Charter and on the basis of present revolutionary achievements. They must pursue unity of action, an increased cohesion and exchanges of views (even on an informal basis) dealing not only with tactical problems and day-to-day struggles but also with strategic and ideological questions. The aim must be to reinforce and render more relevant the *qualitative* contribution of revolutionaries to the building both of the mass movement (in the form of a Front) and of the powerful vanguard party which will guide it.

Thus the contributions of those who already have the experience of a vanguard party and of mass work will be able to bear fruit together with the contributions of those who, in key positions in the FLN or the institutions of the State, have played an important part at certain crucial points in the revolution.

Thus the various centres of socialist activity will gain strength to preserve *together* their freedom of action as against conservative bourgeois tendencies. Together they will be better able to rebuff the oppression and the divisive attempts of imperialist and reactionary forces, from an irreversibly superior ideological and political position.

The Perspectives of the Great Vanguard Party

These perspectives, opened up for us by historic possibilities, have many factors in their favour. But the success of this step is not inevitable or pre-ordained. It will encounter serious obstacles, especially from the joint activity of international imperialism and of local Arab reaction.

As for the forms to be taken by this march towards the building of the principal instrument of socialist revolution, the rhythm of the march, its advances and checks, these will not depend on mere intentions, on administrative arrangements or on timetables laid down in advance. They will depend greatly upon the national and international situations and upon the quality and strength of the efforts deployed in the correct direction.

During the whole of the period, the length of which cannot be determined today, which separates us from the achievement of this objective, our united will, tested repeatedly in the past, must be deployed with ever greater conviction, for the struggles to come will demand great mutual understanding on the part of all those who set out to pursue this noble common objective.

So far as we are concerned, we have no conditions precedent, no preconceived ideas as to the *forms* which life will produce. While recognising that the outcome must depend on numerous national and international factors and while not excluding the possibility that the process of positive evolution may receive checks, due to the fact that the revolutionary process in Algeria has not yet reached the point of no return, we are convinced that this process corresponds with the realities of present-day Algeria and we consider ourselves as partners in, and an integral part of, this process.

We further do not exclude the possibility that the FLN may succeed in transforming itself into a true vanguard party, which would mean giving it the mission of regrouping *all* the forces of socialism in an institutional framework to which the FLN would have contributed a substantial force of militants at all levels.

What matters to us in the whole of this process is not competition between organisations or the pursuit of sectarian objectives. What is supremely important to us, as to all urban and rural workers and all true progressives, is above all questions of policy and their solution in the most open-minded spirit.

This is why we hope that our principled activity, guided by the national interest and the interests of progress, will be seen in its true light by our comrades in arms. Any kind of wrecking activity is alien to the present or future approach of communist militants within the framework of social or political organisations of whatever nature, and within the state apparatus. Our activity is inspired in every case by the common interests and long-term objectives of the forces of socialism.

In the same way, our claim to independence of initiative and action, does not involve disputing the official status of the FLN or adopting a hostile position towards it. If there are still secondary contradictions between progressives moving in the direction of socialism, it is precisely through the attempt to build a great vanguard party directing a mass Front that such contradictions can be overcome. All our actions are to be seen within the framework of the rights and freedoms granted to citizens by the Constitution, as interpreted in the most correct and revolutionary way.

Therefore we hope that the forthcoming Congress of the FLN will be a first step towards its renewal, so that it can play a dynamic role in the revolution. It will not be as passive spectators but in a spirit of revolutionary co-operation and solidarity that we shall watch and contribute to all stages of this renewal. Like other progressives, we shall take a great interest in the positions and policies which emerge from this Congress.

It is necessary to conduct and organise together, with the growing participation of the masses, struggles linked to the tasks of national and social progress, through which the guiding socialist vanguard party will be forged, for the existence of this party depends on struggle and not on legal texts.

As was the case in the battles for the recovery of national wealth, for the agrarian revolution, for social rights and for the raising of the workers' standard of living, we will continue to work with all our strength for the success of a mass Front and an authentic vanguard party. We are prepared to take on the responsibilities of socialist militants in every situation, in advance or retreat, as active, loyal and conscious participants in the historic march of our people to socialism – the ideal for which Algerian workers, peasants and intellectuals have fought on our soil for decades.

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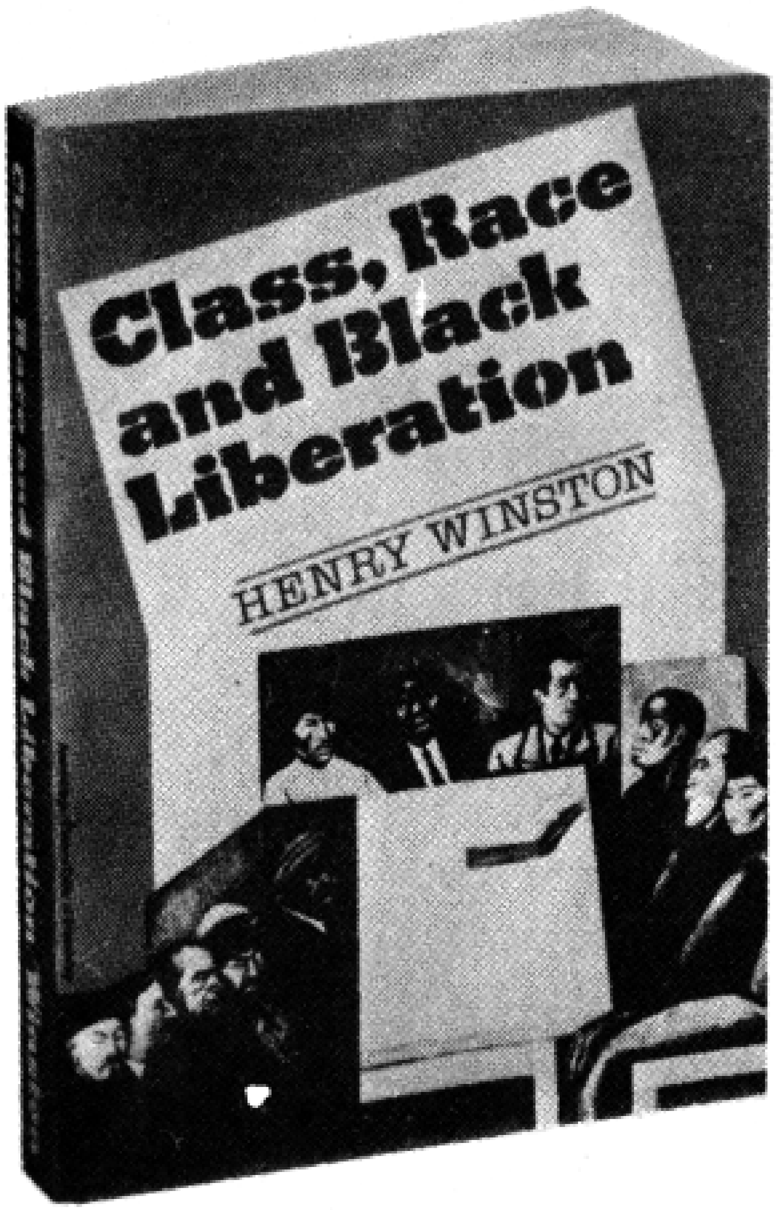
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